THE DEFENCE OF Poesie.

By Sir Phillip Sidney, Knight.

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An Apologie for POETRIE.

WHen the right vertuous *Edward VVotton*, & I, were at the Emperors Court together, wee gaue our ſelues to learne horſemanſhip of *Iohn Pietro Pugliano*: one that with great commendation had the place of an Eſquire in his ſtable. And hee, according to the fertilnes of the Italian wit, did not onely afoord vs the demonſtration of his practiſe, but ſought to enrich our mindes with the contemplations therein, which hee thought moſt precious. But with none I remember mine eares were at any time more loden, then when (either angred with ſlowe paiment, or mooued with our learner-like admiration,) he exerciſed his ſpeech in the prayſe of his facultie. Hee ſayd, Souldiours were the nobleſt eſtate of mankinde,

Io: Pietro Pugliano.

Prayſe of Souldiours & Horſemen.

and horſemen, the nobleſt of Souldiours. Hee ſayde, they were the Maiſters of warre, and ornaments of peace: ſpeedy goers, and ſtrong abiders, triumphers both in Camps & Courts. Nay, to ſo vnbeleeued a poynt hee proceeded, as that no earthly thing bred ſuch wonder to a Prince, as to be a good horſeman. Skill of gouernment, was but a Pedanteria in compariſon: thē would hee adde certaine prayſes, by telling what a peerleſſe beaſt a horſe was. The onely ſeruiceable Courtier without flattery, the beaſt of moſt beutie, faithfulnes, courage, and ſuch more, that if I had not beene a peece of a Logician before I came to him, I think he would haue perſwaded mee to haue wiſhed my ſelfe a horſe. But thus much at leaſt with his no fewe words hee draue into me, that ſelfe-loue is better then any guilding to make that ſeeme gorgious, wherein our ſelues are parties. VVherin, if *Pugliano* his ſtrong affection and weake arguments will not ſatisfie you, I wil giue you a neerer example of my ſelfe, who (I knowe not by what miſchance) in theſe my not old yeres & ideleſt times, hauing ſlipt into the title of a Poet, am prouoked to ſay ſomthing vnto you in the defence of that my vnelected vocation, which if I handle with more good will then good reaſons, beare with me, ſith the ſcholler is to be pardoned that foloweth the ſteppes of his Maiſter. And yet I muſt ſay, that as I haue iuſt cauſe to make a pittiful defence of poore Poetry,

Horſemanſhip commendeth Princes.

Praiſe of Horſes.

Philautia.

Poetry diſcuſſed.

etry, which from almoſt the higheſt eſtimation of learning, is fallen to be the laughingſtocke of children. So haue I need to bring ſome more auaileable proofes: ſith the former is by no man barred of his deſerued credite, the ſilly latter hath had euen the names of Philoſophers vſed to the defacing of it, with great danger of ciuill war amōg the Muſes. And firſt, truly to al thē that profeſsing learning inueigh againſt Poetry, may iuſtly be obiected, that they goe very neer to vngratfulnes, to ſeek to deface that, which in the nobleſt nations & languages that are knowne, hath been the firſt light-giuer to ignorance, and firſt Nurſe, whoſe milk by little & little enabled them to feed afterwards of tougher knowledges: & will they now play the Hedghog, that being receiued into the den, draue out his hoſt? or rather the Vipers, that with theyr birth kill their Parents? Let learned Greece in any of her manifold Sciences, be able to ſhew me one booke, before *Muſæus*, *Homer*, & *Heſiodus*, all three nothing els but Poets. Nay, let any hiſtorie be brought, that can ſay any VVriters were there before thē, if they were not men of the ſame skil, as *Orpheus*, *Linus*, and ſome other are named: who hauing beene the firſt of that Country, that made pens deliuerers of their knowledge to their poſterity, may iuſtly chalenge to bee called their Fathers in learning: for not only in time they had this priority (although in it ſelf antiquity be venerable,) but went before

them, as cauſes to drawe with their charming ſweetnes, the wild vntamed wits to an admiration of knowledge. So as *Amphion* was ſayde to moue ſtones with his Poetrie, to build Thebes. And *Orpheus* to be liſtened to by beaſtes, indeed, ſtony and beaſtly people. So among the Romans were *Liuius*, *Andronicus*, and *Ennius*. So in the Italian language, the firſt that made it aſpire to be a Treaſure-houſe of Science, were the Poets *Dante*, *Boccace*, and *Petrarch*. So in our Engliſh were *Gower* and *Chawcer*.

Philoſophers Poets.

After whom, encouraged and delighted with theyr excellent fore-going, others haue followed, to beautifie our mother tongue, as wel in the ſame kinde as in other Arts. This did ſo notably ſhewe it ſelfe, that the Phyloſophers of Greece, durſt not a long time appeare to the worlde but vnder the masks of Poets. So *Thales*, *Empedocles*, and *Parmenides*, ſange their naturall Phyloſophie in verſes: ſo did *Pythagoras* and *Phocilides* their morral counſells: ſo did *Tirteus* in war matters, & *Solon* in matters of policie: or rather, they beeing Poets, dyd exerciſe their delightful vaine in thoſe points of higheſt knowledge, which before them lay hid to the world. For that wiſe *Solon* was directly a Poet, it is manifeſt, hauing written in verſe, the notable fable of the Atlantick Iland, which was continued by *Plato*.

Pythagoras.

Solon.

Plato.

And truely, euen *Plato*, whoſoeuer well conſidereth, ſhall find, that in the body of his work, though

though the inside & strength were Philosophy, the skinne as it were & beautie, depended most of Poetrie: for all standeth vpon Dialogues, wherein he faineth many honest Burgesses of Athens to speake of such matters, that if they had been sette on the racke, they would neuer haue confessed them. Besides, his poetical describing the circumstances of their meetings, as the well ordering of a banquet, the delicacie of a walke, with enterlacing meere tales, as *Giges* Ring, and others, which who knoweth not to be flowers of Poetrie, did neuer walke into *Apollos* Garden.

Historians ayded by Poetrie.

And euen Historiographers, (although theyr lippes sounde of things doone, & veritie be written in theyr fore-heads,) haue been glad to borrow both fashion, and perchance weight of Poets. So *Herodotus* entituled his Historie, by the name of the nine Muses; and both he and all the rest that follow'd him, either stole or vsurped of Poetrie, their passionate describing of passions, the many particularities of battailes, which no man could affirme: or if that be denied me, long Orations put in the mouthes of great Kings and Captaines, which it is certaine they neuer pronounced. So that truely, neyther Philosopher nor Historiographer, coulde at the first haue entred into the gates of populer iudgements, if they had not taken a great passport of Poetry, which in all Nations at this day wher learning flourisheth not, is plaine to be seene; in all which they haue

Herodotus.

ſome feeling of Poetry. In Turky, beſides their lawe-giuing Diuines, they haue no other VVriters but Poets. In our neighbour Countrey Ireland, where truelie learning goeth very bare, yet are theyr Poets held in a deuoute reuerence. Euen among the moſt barbarous and ſimple Indians where no writing is, yet haue they their Poets, who make and ſing ſongs which they call *Aryites*, both of theyr Aunceſtors deedes, & praiſes of theyr Gods. A ſufficient probabilitie, that if euer learning come among thē, it muſt be by hauing theyr hard dull wits ſoftned and ſharpened with the ſweete delights of Poetrie. For vntill they find a pleaſure in the exerciſes of the minde, great promiſes of much knowledge, will little perſwade them, that knowe not the fruites of knowledge. In VVales, the true remnant of the auncient Brittons, as there are good authorities to ſhewe the long time they had Poets, which they called *Bardes*: ſo thorough all the conqueſts of Romaines, Saxons, Danes, and Normans, ſome of whom did ſeeke to ruine all memory of learning from among them, yet doo their Poets euen to this day, laſt; ſo as it is not more notable in ſoone beginning then in long continuing. But ſince the Authors of moſt of our Sciences were the Romans, and before them the Greekes, let vs a little ſtand vppon their authorities, but euen ſo farre as to ſee, what names they haue giuen vnto this now ſcorned skill.

Aryites.

Bardes.

Among

The diuers names given to Poets.

Among the Romans a Poet was called *Vates*, which is as much as a Diuiner, Fore-seer, or Prophet, as by his conioyned wordes *Vaticinium* & *Vaticinari*, is manifest: so heauenly a title did that excellent people bestow vpō this hart-rauishing knowledge. And so farre were they carried into the admiration thereof, that they thought in the chaunceable hitting vppon any such verses, great fore-tokens of their following fortunes were placed. VVhereupon grew the worde of *Sortes Virgiliana*, when by suddaine opening *Virgils* booke, they lighted vpon any verse of hys making, whereof the histories of the Emperors liues are full: as of *Albinus* the Gouernour of our Iland, who in his childe-hoode mette with this verse,

Vates.

Sortes Virgiliana.

Arma amens capio nec sat rationis in armis.

And in his age performed it, which although it were a very vaine, and godles superstition, as also it was to think that spirits were commaunded by such verses, whereupon this word charmes, deriued of *Carmina* commeth, so yet serueth it to shew the great reuerence those wits were helde in. And altogether not without ground, since both the Oracles of *Delphos* and *Sibillas* prophecies, were wholy deliuered in verses. For that same exquisite obseruing of number and measure in words, and that high flying liberty of conceit proper to the Poet, did seeme to haue some dyuine force in it.

Charmes.

And

And may not I presume a little further, to shew the reasonablenes of this worde *Vates*? And say that the holy *Davids* Psalmes are a diuine Poem? If I doo, I shall not do it without the testimonie of great learned men, both auncient & moderne: but euen the name Psalmes will speake for mee, which being interpreted, is nothing but songes. Then that it is fully written in meeter, as all learned Hebricians agree, although the rules be not yet fully found. Lastly & principally, his handeling his prophecy, which is meerely poetical. For what els is the awaking his musicall instruments? The often and free changing of persons? His notable *Prosopopeias*, whē he maketh you as it were, see God comming in his Maiestie. His telling of the Beasts ioyfulnes, and hills leaping, but a heauenlie poesie: wherein almost thee sheweth himselfe a passionate louer, of that vnspeakable and euerlasting beautie to be seene by the eyes of the minde, onely cleered by fayth. But truely nowe hauing named him, I feare mee I seeme to prophane that holy name, applying it to Poetrie, which is among vs throwne downe to so ridiculous an estimation: but they that with quiet iudgements will looke a little deeper into it, shall finde the end and working of it such, as beeing rightly applyed, deserueth not to bee scourged out of the Church of God.

Davids Psalmes.

Maker.

But now, let vs see how the Greekes named it, and howe they deemed of it. The Greekes called

called him a Poet, which name, hath as the moſt excellent, gone thorough other Languages. It cõmeth of this word *Poiein*, which is, to make: wherein I know not, whether by lucke or wiſedome, wee Engliſhmen haue mette with the Greekes, in calling him a maker: which name, how high and incomparable a title it is, I had rather were knowne by marking the ſcope of other Sciences, then by my partiall allegation.

Artes obiect Natura.

There is no Arte deliuered to mankinde, that hath not the workes of Nature for his principall obiect, without which they could not conſiſt, & on which they ſo depend, as they become Actors and Players as it were, of what Nature will haue ſet foorth. So doth the Aſtronomer looke vpon the ſtarres, and by that hee ſeeth, ſetteth downe what order Nature hath taken therein. So doe the Geometrician, & Arithmetician, in their diuerſe ſorts of quantities. So doth the Muſitian in times, tel you which by nature agree, which not. The naturall Philoſopher theron hath his name, and the Morrall Philoſopher ſtandeth vpon the naturall vertues, vices, and paſsions of man; and followe Nature (ſaith hee) therein, & thou ſhalt not erre. The Lawyer ſayth what men haue determined. The Hiſtorian what men haue done. The Grammarian ſpeaketh onely of the rules of ſpeech, and the Rethorician, and Logitian, conſidering what in Nature will ſooneſt proue and perſwade, thereon giue artificial rules, which ſtill

The ſubiect of Aſtronomie.

Geometrie. Arithmetique.

Naturall Philoſophie. Morall.

Lawe. Hiſtorie. Grammar. Rhetorique. Logique.

Phisicke. Metaphisicke. Poetrie.

are compassed within the circle of a question, according to the proposed matter. The Phisition waigheth the nature of a mans bodie, and the nature of things helpeful, or hurtefull vnto it. And the Metaphisick, though it be in the seconde and abstract notions, and therefore be counted supernaturall: yet doth hee indeede builde vpon the depth of Nature: onely the Poet, disdayning to be tied to any such subiection, lifted vp with the vigor of his owne inuention, dooth growe in effect, another nature, in making things either better then Nature bringeth forth, or quite a newe formes such as neuer were in Nature, as the *Heroes*, *Demigods*, *Cyclops*, *Chimeras*, *Furies*, & such like: so as hee goeth hand in hand with Nature, not inclosed within the narrow warrant of her guifts, but freely ranging onely within the Zodiack of his owne wit.

Poetrie disiueresth all perfection, & transcendeth the grounds of Nature.

Nature neuer set forth the earth in so rich tapistry, as diuers Poets haue done, neither with pleasant riuers, fruitful trees, sweet smelling flowers: nor what soeuer els may make the too much loued earth more louely. Her world is brasen, the Poets only deliuer a golden: but let those things alone and goe to man, for whom as the other things are, so it seemeth in him her vttermost cunning is imployed, and knowe whether shee haue brought foorth so true a louer as *Theagines*, so constant a friende as *Piludes*, so valiant a man as *Orlando*, so right a Prince as *Xenophons Cyrus*: so excel-

excellent a man euery way, as *Virgils Aeneas*: neither let this be ieſtingly conceiued, becauſe the works of the one be eſſentiall: the other, in imitation or fiction: for any vnderſtanding knoweth the skil of the Artificer, ſtandeth in that *Idea* or fore-conceite of the work, & not in the work it ſelfe. And that the Poet hath that *Idea*, is manifeſt, by deliuering them forth in ſuch excellencie as hee hath imagined them. VVhich deliuering forth alſo, is not wholie imaginatiue, as we are wont to ſay by them that build Caſtles in the ayre: but ſo farre ſubſtantially it worketh, not onely to make a *Cyrus*, which had been but a particuler excellencie, as Nature might haue done, but to beſtow a *Cyrus* vpon the worlde, to make many *Cyrus's*, if they wil learne aright, why, and how that Maker made him.

Neyther let it be deemed too ſawcie a compariſon to ballance the higheſt poynt of mans wit with the efficacie of Nature: but rather giue right honor to the heauenly Maker of that maker: who hauing made man to his owne likenes, ſet him beyond & ouer all the workes of that ſecond nature, which in nothing hee ſheweth ſo much as in Poetrie: when with the force of a diuine breath, he bringeth things forth far ſurpaſſing her dooings, with no ſmall argument to the incredulous of that firſt accurſed fall of *Adam*: ſith our erected wit, maketh vs know what perfection is, and yet our infected will, keepeth vs

Man made maiſter of all the other works of Nature by him excelleth.

from reaching vnto it. But theſe arguments wil by fewe be vnderſtood, and by fewer granted. Thus much (I hope) will be giuen me, that the Greekes with ſome probabilitie of reaſon, gaue him the name aboue all names of learning. Now let vs goe to a more ordinary opening of him, that the trueth may be more palpable: and ſo I hope, though we get not ſo vnmatched a praiſe as the Etimologie of his names will grant, yet his very deſcription, which no man will denie, ſhall not iuſtly be barred from a principall commendation.

Poetris w^l.

Poeſie therefore is an arte of imitation, for ſo *Ariſtotle* termeth it in this word *Mimeſis*, that is to ſay, a repreſenting, counterfetting, or figuring foorth: to ſpeake metaphorically, a ſpeaking picture: with this end, to teach and delight; of this haue beene three ſeuerall kindes. The chiefe both in antiquitie & excellencie, were they that did imitate the inconceiuable excellencies of GOD. Such were, *Dauid* in his Pſalmes, *Salomon* in his ſong of Songs, in his Eccleſiaſtes, and Prouerbs: *Moſes* and *Debora* in theyr Hymnes, and the writer of *Iob*; which beſide other, the learned *Emanuell Tremelius*, & *Franciſcus Iunius*, doe entitle the poeticall part of the Scripture. Againſt theſe none will ſpeake that hath the holie Ghoſt in due holy reuerence.

3. kindes of Poetrie.

1. Diuine.

In this kinde, though in a full wrong diuinitie, were *Orpheus*, *Amphion*, *Homer* in his hymnes, and

and many other, both Greekes and Romaines: and this Poesie must be vsed, by whosoeuer will follow S. *Iames* his counsell, in singing Psalmes when they are merry: and I knowe is vsed with the fruite of comfort by some, when in sorrowfull pangs of their death-bringing sinnes, they find the consolation of the neuer-leauing goodnesse.

The second kinde, is of them that deale with matters Philosophicall; eyther morrall, as *Virtetus*, *Phocilides*, and *Cato*, or naturall, as *Lucretius*, and *Virgils Georgicks*: or Astronomicall, as *Manilius*, & *Pontanus*: or historical, as *Lucan*: which who mislike, the faulte is in their iudgements quite out of taste, and not in the sweet foode of sweetly vttered knowledge. But because thys second sorte is wrapped within the folde of the proposed subiect, and takes not the course of his owne inuention, whether they properly be Poets or no, let Gramarians dispute: and goe to the thyrd, indeed right Poets, of whom chiefly this question ariseth; betwixt whom, & these second is such a kinde of difference, as betwixt the meaner sort of Painters, (who counterfet onely such faces as are sette before them,) and the more excellent: who hauing no law but wit, bestow that in cullours vpon you which is fittest for the eye to see: as the constant, though lamenting looke of *Lucretia*, when she punished in her selfe an others fault.

2. Philosophical. — Morrall. — Naturall. — Astronomicall. — Historicall.

3. Makers.

VVherein he painteth not *Lucretia* whom he neuer sawe, but painteth the outwarde beauty of such a vertue: for these third be they which most properly do imitate to teach and delight, and to imitate, borrow nothing of what is, hath been, or shall be: but range onely rayned with learned discretion, into the diuine consideration of what may be, and should be. These bee they, that as the first and most noble sorte, may iustly bee termed *Vates*, so these are waited on in the excellenst languages and best vnderstandings, with the fore described name of Poets: for these indeede doo meerely make to imitate: and imitate both to delight & teach: and delight to moue men to take that goodnes in hande, which without delight they would flye as from a stranger. And teach, to make them know that goodnes whereunto they are mooued, which being the noblest scope to which euer any learning was directed, yet want there not idle tongues to barke at them. These be subdiuided into sundry more speciall denominations. The most notable bee the *Heroick*, *Lirick*, *Tragick*, *Comick*, *Satirick*, *Iambick*, *Elegiack*, *Pastorall*, and certaine others. Some of these being termed according to the matter they deale with, some by the sorts of verses they liked best to write in, for indeede the greatest part of Poets haue apparelled their poeticall inuentions in that numbrous kinde of writing which is called verse: indeed but apparelled, verse being but

Vates.

The diuers kindes thereof.

Verse.

an

an ornament and no cause to Poetry: sith there haue beene many most excellent Poets, that neuer versified, and nowe swarme many versifiers that neede neuer aunswere to the name of Poets. For *Xenophon*, who did imitate so excellently, as to giue vs *effigiem iusti imperij*, the portraiture of a iust Empire vnder the name of *Cyrus*, (as *Cicero* sayth of him) made therein an absolute heroicall Poem. *Xenophon.*

So did *Heliodorus* in his sugred inuention of that picture of loue in *Theagines* and *Caritea*, and yet both these writ in Prose: which I speak to shew, that it is not riming and versing that maketh a Poet, no more then a long gowne maketh an Aduocate: who though he pleaded in armes should be an Aduocate and no Souldier. But it is that fayning notable images of vertues, vices, or what els, with that delightfull teaching which must be the right describing note to know a Poet by: although indeed the Senate of Poets hath chosen verse as their fittest rayment, meaning, as in matter they passed all in all, so in manner to goe beyond them: not speaking (table talke fashion, or like men in a dreame,) words as they chaunceably fall from the mouth, but peyzing each sillable of each worde by iust proportion according to the dignitie of the subiect. *Heliodorus.* *Verse. Rimoe.*

Nowe therefore it shall not bee amisse first to waigh this latter sort of Poetrie by his workes, & then by his partes, and if in neyther of these Anatomies

Learninges effects.

The most noble knowledge teacheth a man to knowe himselfe, to doe well, and to poetrie &c.

natomies hee be condemnable, I hope wee shall obtaine a more fauourable sentence. This purifiing of wit, this enritching of memory, enabling of iudgment, and enlarging of conceyt, which cōmonly we call learning, vnder what name soeuer it com forth, or to what immediat end soeuer it be directed, the final end is, to lead & draw vs to as high a perfection, as our degenerate soules made worse by theyr clayey lodgings, can be capable of. This according to the inclination of the man, bred many formed impressions, for some that thought this felicity principally to be gotten by knowledge, and no knowledge to be so high and heauenly, as acquaintance with the starres, gaue themselues to Astronomie; others, perswading themselues to be *Demi-gods* if they knewe the causes of things, became naturall and supernaturall Philosophers, some an admirable delight drew to Musicke: and some, the certainty of demonstration, to the Mathematickes. But all, one, and other, hauing this scope to knowe, and by knowledge to lift vp the mind from the dungeon of the body, to the enioying his owne diuine essence. But when by the ballance of experience it was found, that the Astronomer looking to the starres might fall into a ditch, that the enquiring Philosopher might be blinde in himselfe, and the Mathematician might draw foorth a straight line with a crooked hart: then loe, did proofe the ouer ruler of opinions, make manifest,

The originalls of Sciences.

Astronomie.

Natural Philosophie.

Musicke.

Mathematics.

that

that all these are but seruing Sciences, which as they haue each a priuate end in themselues, so yet are they all directed to the highest end of the mistres Knowledge, by the Greekes called *Arkitectonike*, which stands, (as I thinke) in the knowledge of a mans selfe, in the Ethicke and politick consideration, with the end of well doing and not of well knowing onely; euen as the Sadlers next end is to make a good saddle: but his farther end, to serue a nobler facultie, which is horsemanship, so the horsemans to souldiery, and the Souldier not onely to haue the skill, but to performe the practise of a Souldier: so that the ending end of all earthly learning, being vertuous action, those skilles that most serue to bring forth that, haue a most iust title to bee Princes ouer all the rest; wherein if wee can shewe the Poets nobleness, by setting him before his other Competitors, among whom as principall challengers step forth the morrall Philosophers, whom me thinketh, I see comming towards mee with a sullen grauity, as though they could not abide vice by day light, rudely clothed for to witnes outwardly their cõtempt of outward things, with bookes in their hands against glory, whereto they sette theyr names, sophistically speaking against subtility, and angry with any man in whom they see the foule fault of anger; these men casting barges as they goe, of Definitions, Diuisions, and Distinctions, with a scornefull interogatiue, doe so-

Architectonick.

Ethicke.

Vertuous Action.

The morall Philosophers.

berly aske, whether it bee possible to finde any path, so ready to leade a man to vertue, as that which teacheth what vertue is? and teacheth it not onely by deliuering forth his very being, his causes, and effects: but also, by making known his enemie vice, which must be destroyed, and his combersome seruant Passion, which must be maistered, by shewing the generalities that contayneth it, and the specialities that are deriued from it. Lastly, by playne setting downe, how it extendeth it selfe out of the limits of a mans own little world, to the gouernment of families, and maintayning of publique societies.

The Historian. The Historian, scarcely giueth leysure to the Moralist, to say so much, but that he loden with old Mouse-eaten records, authorising himselfe (for the most part) vpon other histories, whose greatest authorities, are built vpon the notable foundation of Heare-say, hauing much a-doe to accord differing VVriters, and to pick trueth out of partiality, better acquainted with a thousande yeeres a goe, then with the present age: and yet better knowing how this world goeth, thē how his owne wit runneth; curious for antiquities, and inquisitiue of nouelties, a wonder to young folkes, and a tyrant in table talke, denieth in a great chafe, that any man for teaching of vertue, and vertuous actions, is comparable to him. I am *Lux vitæ, Temporum magistra, Vita memoriæ, Nuncia vetustatis. &c.*

The

The Phylosopher (sayth hee) teacheth a disputatiue vertue, but I doe an actiue: his vertue is excellent in the dangerlesse Academie of *Plato*, but mine sheweth foorth her honorable face, in the battailes of *Marathon*, *Pharsalia*, *Poitiers*, and *Agincourt*. Hee teacheth vertue by certaine abstract considerations, but I onely bid you follow the footing of them that haue gone before you. Olde-aged experience, goeth beyond the fine-witted Phylosopher, but I giue the experience of many ages. Lastly, if he make the Song-booke, I put the learners hand to the Lute: and if hee be the guide, I am the light.

Then woulde hee alledge you innumerable examples, confirming storie by storie, how much the wisest Senatours and Princes, haue beene directed by the credite of history, as *Brutus*, *Alphonsus* of *Aragon*, and who not, if neede bee? At length, the long lyne of theyr disputation maketh a poynt in thys, that the one giueth the precept, and the other the example.

Nowe, whom shall wee finde (sith the question standeth for the highest forme in the Schoole of learning,) to bee Moderator? Trulie, as mee seemeth, the Poet; and if not a Moderator, euen the man that ought to carrie the title from them both, and much more from all other seruing Sciences. Therefore compare we the Poet with the Historian, and with the Morrall Phylosopher; and, if hee goe beyond them

Poetrie excelleth both the moral Philosophie and Historie, in teaching vertuous lesson. ff.

Diuinitye.

both, no other humaine skill can match him. For as for the Diuine, with all reuerence it is euer to be excepted, not only for hauing his scope as far beyonde any of these, as eternitie exceedeth a moment, but euen for passing each of these in themselues.

Lawe.

And for the Lawyer, though *Ius* bee the Daughter of Iustice, and Iustice the chiefe of Vertues, yet because hee seeketh to make men good, rather *Formidine pœnæ*, then *Virtutis amore*, or to say righter, dooth not indeuour to make men good, but that their euill hurt not others: hauing no care so hee be a good Citizen, how bad a man he be. Therefore, as our wickednesse maketh him necessarie, & necessitie maketh him honorable, so is hee not in the deepest trueth to stande in rancke with these; who all indeuour to take naughtines away, and plant goodnesse euen in the secretest cabinet of our soules. And these foure are all, that any way deale in that cõsideration of mens manners, which beeing the supreme knowledge, they that best breed it, deserue the best commendation.

Comparison of Doctrine with morralitye & Historie.

The Philosopher therfore and the Historian, are they which would win the gole: the one by precept, the other by example. But both not hauing both, doe both halte. For the Philosopher, setting downe with thorny argument the bare rule, is so hard of vtterance, and so mistie to bee conceiued, that one that hath no other guide but him,

him, shall wade in him till hee beolde, before he shall finde sufficient cause to bee honester, for his knowledge standeth so vpon the abstract and generall, that happie is that man who may vnderstande him, and more happie, that can applye what hee gooth vnderstand.

On the other side, the Historian wanting the precept, is so tyed, not to what shoulde bee, but to what is, to the particuler truth of things, and not to the generall reason of things, that hys example draweth no necessary consequence, and therefore a lesse fruitelesse doctrine.

Nowe dooth the peerelesse Poet performe both: for whatsoeuer the Philosopher sayth shoulde be doone, hee giueth a perfect picture of it in some one, by whom hee presupposeth it was doone. So as hee coupleth the generall notion with the particuler example. A perfect picture I say, for hee yeeldeth to the powers of the minde, an image of that whereof the Philosopher bestoweth but a woordish description: vvhich dooth neyther strike, pierce, nor possesse the sight of the soule, so much as that other dooth.

For as in outward things, to a man that had neuer seene an Elephant or a Rinoceros, who should tell him most exquisitely all theyr shapes, cullour bignesse, and perticular markes: or of a gorgeous Pallace, the Architecture, with declaring the full beauties, might well make the hea-

ret abse to repeate as it were by rote, all hee had heard, yet should neuer satisfie his inward conceits, with being witnes to it selfe of a true liuely knowledge: but the same man, as soone as hee might see those beasts well painted, or the house wel in moddel, should straightwaies grow without need of any discription, to a iudiciall cōprehending of them, so no doubt the Philosopher with his learned definition, bee it of vertue, vices, matters of publick policie, or priuat gouernment, replenisheth the memory with many infallible grounds of wisdom: which notwithstanding, lye darke before the imaginatiue and iudging powre, if they bee not illuminated or figured foorth by the speaking picture of Poesie.

Loue of our Countrie.

Tullie taketh much paynes and many times not without poeticall helpes, to make vs knowe the force loue of our Countrey hath in vs. Let vs but heare old *Anchises* speaking in the middest of Troyes flames, or see *Vlisses* in the fulnes of all *Calipso's* delights, bewayle his absence from barraine and beggerly *Ithaca*. Anger the *Stoicks* say, was a short maddesse, let but *Sophocles* bring you *Aiax* on a stage, killing and whipping Sheepe & Oxen, thinking them the Army of Greeks, with theyr Chiefetaines *Agamemnon* and *Menelaus*, and tell mee if you haue not a more familiar insight into anger, then finding in the Schoolemen his *Genus* and difference. See whether wisdome and temperance in *Vlisses* and *Diomedes*, valure in

Anger or Furie.

Achilles,

Achilles, friendship in *Nisus*, and *Eurialus*, euen to an ignoraunt man, carry not an apparent shyning: and contrarily, the remorse of conscience in *Oedipus*, the soone repenting pride in *Agamemnon*, the selfe-deuouring crueltie in his Father *Atreus*, the violence of ambition in the two *Theban* brothers, the sowre-sweetnes of reuenge in *Medea*, and to fall lower, the *Terentian Gnato*, and our *Chaucers* Pandar, so expresst, that we nowe vse their names to signifie their trades. And finally, all vertues, vices, and passions, so in their own naturall seates layd to the viewe, that wee seeme not to heare of them, but cleerely to see through them. But euen in the most excellent determination of goodnes, what Philosophers counsell can so redily direct a Prince, as the fayned *Cyrus* in *Xenophon*? or a vertuous man in all fortunes, as *Aeneas* in *Virgill*? or a whole Cõmon-wealth, as the way of Sir *Thomas Moores Eutopia*? I say the way, because where Sir *Thomas More* erred, it was the fault of the man and not of the Poet, for that way of patterning a Common-wealth was most absolute, though hee perchaunce hath not so absolutely performed it: for the question is, whether the fayned image of Poesie, or the regular instruction of Philosophy, hath the more force in teaching: wherein if the Philosophers haue more rightly shewed themselues Philosophers, then the Poets haue obtained to the high top of their profession, as in truth,

Medio-

Nec Dijs, nec hominibus esse poetis,
Non Dij, non homines, non concessere Columnæ.

It is I say againe, not the fault of the Art, but that by fewe men that Arte can bee accomplished.

Certainly, euen our Sauiour Christ could as well haue giuen the morrall common places of vncharitablenes and humblenes, as the diuine narration of *Dives* and *Lazarus*: or of disobedience and mercy, as that heauenly discourse of the lost Child and the gratious Father: but that hys through-searching wisdom, knewe the estate of *Dives* burning in hell, and of *Lazarus* being in *Abrahams* bosome, would more constantly (as it were,) inhabit both the memory and iudgment. Truly, for my selfe, mee seemes I see before my eyes the lost Childes disdainefull prodigality, turned to enuie a Swines dinner: which by the learned Diuines, are thought not historicall acts, but instructing Parables. For conclusion, I say the Philosopher teacheth, but he teacheth obscurely, so as the learned onely can vnderstande him: that is to say, he teacheth them that are already taught, but the Poet is the foode for the tenderest stomacks, the Poet is indeed the right Popular Philosopher, whereof *Esops* tales giue good proofe: whose pretty Allegories, stealing vnder the formall tales of Beastes, make many, more beastly then Beasts, begin to heare the sound of vertue from these dumbe speakers.

But

But now may it be alledged, that if this imagining of matters be so fitte for the imagination, then must the Historian needs surpasse, who bringeth you images of true matters, such as indeede were doone, and not such as fantastically or falsely may be suggested to haue been doone. Truely *Aristotle* himselfe in his discourse of Poesie, plainely determineth this question, saying, that Poetry is *Philosophoteron*, and *Spoudaioteron*, that is to say, it is more Philosophicall, and more studiously serious, thē history. His reason is, because Poesie dealeth with *Katholou*, that is to say, with the vniuersall consideration; and the history with *Kathekaston*, the perticuler; nowe sayth he, the vniuersall wayes what is fit to bee sayd or done, eyther in likelihood or necessity, (which the Poesie cōsidereth in his impoſed names,) & the perticuler, onely marke, whether *Alcibiades* did, or suffered, this or that. Thus farre *Aristotle*: which reason of his, (as all his) is most full of reason. For indeed, if the question were whether it were better to haue a perticular acte truly or falsly set down: there is no doubt which is to be chosen, no more thē whether you had rather haue *Vespasians* picture right as hee was, or at the Painters pleasure nothing resembling. But if the question be for your owne vse & learning, whether it be better to haue it set downe as it should be, or as it was: then certainely is more doctrinable the fained Cirus in *Xenophon* then the true

Poetrie excelleth Historie both in teaching & delighting.

Cyrus in *Iustine*? and the fayned *Aeneas* in *Virgil*, then the right *Aeneas* in *Dares Phrigius*.

As to a Lady that desired to fashion her countenance to the best grace, a Painter should more benefite her to portraite a most sweet face, wryting *Camilla* vpon it, then to paynt *Camilla* as she was, who *Horace* sweareth, was foule and ill fauoured.

Camilla.

If the Poet doe his part a-right, he will shew you in *Thiestes*, *Atreus*, and such like, nothing that is not to be shunned. In *Cyrus*, *Aeneas*, *Vlisses*, each thing to be followed; where the Historian, bound to tell things as things were, cannot be liberall (without hee will be poeticall) of a perfect patterne: but as in *Alexander* or *Scipio* himselfe, shew doings, some to be liked, some to be misliked. And then how will you discerne what to followe but by your owne discretion, which you had without reading *Quintus Curtius*?

Obiect.

And whereas a man may say, though in vniuersall consideration of doctrine the Poet preuaileth; yet that the historie, in his saying such a thing was doone, doth warrant a man more in that hee shall follow.

Sol.

The answere is manifest, that if hee stande vpon that was; as if hee should argue, because it rayned yesterday, therefore it shoulde rayne to day, then indeede it hath some aduantage to a grose conceite: but if hee know an example onlie, informes a coniectured likelihood, & so goe by

by reason, the Poet dooth so farre exceede him; as hee is to frame his example to that which is most reasonable: be it in warlike, politick, or priuate matters; where the Historian in his bare *Vvas*, hath many times that which wee call fortune, to ouer-rule the best wisedome. Manie times, he must tell euents, whereof he can yeelde no cause: or if hee doe, it must be poeticall; for that a fayned example, hath asmuch force to teach, as a true example: (for as for to mooue, it is cleere, sith the fayned may bee tuned to the highest key of passion,) let vs take one example, wherein a Poet and a Historian doe concur.

Herodotus and *Iustine* do both testifie, that *Zopirus*, King *Darius* faithfull seruaunt, seeing his Maister long resisted by the rebellious *Babilonians*, fayned himselfe in extreame disgrace of his King: for verifying of which, he caused his own nose and eares to be cut off: and so flying to the *Babylonians*, was receiued: and for his knowne valour, so far credited, that hee did finde meanes to deliuer them ouer to *Darius*. Much like matter doth *Liuie* record of *Tarquinius* and his sonne. *Xenophon* excellently faineth such another stratageme, performed by *Abradates* in *Cyrus* behalfe. Now would I fayne know, if occasion bee presented vnto you, to serue your Prince by such an honest dissimulation, why you doe not as well learne it of *Xenophons* fiction, as of the others verity: and truely so much the better, as you shall

ſaue your noſe by the bargaine: for *Abradates* did not counterfet ſo far. So then the beſt of the Hiſtorian, is ſubiect to the Poet; for whatſoeuer action, or faction, whatſoeuer counſell, pollicy, or warre ſtratagem, the Hiſtorian is bound to recite, that may the Poet (if he liſt) with his imitation make his own; beautifying it both for further teaching, and more delighting, as it pleaſeth him: hauing all, from *Dante* his heauen, to hys hell, vnder the authoritie of his penne. VVhich if I be asked what Poets haue done ſo, as I might well name ſome, yet ſay I, and ſay againe, I ſpeak of the Arte, and not of the Artificer.

Nowe, to that which commonly is attributed to the prayſe of hiſtories, in reſpect of the notable learning is gotten by marking the ſucceſſe, as though therein a man ſhould ſee vertue exalted, and vice puniſhed. Truely that commendation is peculiar to Poetrie, and farre of from Hiſtory. For indeede Poetrie euer ſetteth vertue ſo out in her beſt cullours, making Fortune her wel-waiting hand-mayd, that one muſt needs be enamored of her. VVell may you ſee *Vliſſes* in a ſtorme, and in other hard plights; but they are but exerciſes of patience & magnanimitie, to make them ſhine the more in the neere-following proſperitie. And of the contrarie part, if euill men come to the ſtage, they euer goe out (as the Tragedie VVriter anſwered, to one that miſliked the ſhew of ſuch perſons) ſo manacled, as they little ani-

of

mate folkes to followe them. But the Hiſtorian, beeing captiued to the trueth of a fooliſh world, is many times a terror frō well dooing, and an incouragement to vnbrideled wickednes.

For, ſee wee not valiant *Milciades* rot in his fetters? The iuſt *Phocion*, and the accompliſhed *Socrates*, put to death like Traytors? The cruell *Seuerus* liue proſperouſly? The excellent *Seuerus* miſerably murthered? *Sylla* and *Marius* dying in theyr beddes? *Pompey* and *Cicero* ſlaine then, when they would haue thought exile a happineſſe?

See wee not vertuous *Cato* driuen to kyll himſelfe? and rebell *Caſar* ſo aduaunced, that his name yet after 1600. yeeres, lafteth in the higheſt honor? And marke but euen *Caſars* own words of the fore-named *Sylla*, (who in that onely did honeſtly, to put downe his diſhoneſt tyrannie,) *Literas neſciuit*, as if want of learning cauſed him to doe well. Hee meant it not by Poetrie, which not content with earthly plagues, deuiſeth new puniſhments in hel for Tyrants: nor yet by Philoſophie, which teacheth *Occidendos eſſe*, but no doubt by skill in Hiſtorie: for that indeede can affoord you *Cipſelus*, *Periander*, *Phalaris*, *Dioniſius*, and I know not how many more of the ſame kennell, that ſpeede well enough in theyr abhominable vniuſtice or vſurpation. I conclude therefore, that hee excelleth Hiſtorie, not onely in furniſhing the minde with knowledge, but in

ſetting it forward, to that which deſerueth to be called and accounted good: which ſetting forward, and moouing to well dooing, indeed ſetteth the Lawrell crowne vpon the Poet as victorious, not onely of the Hiſtorian, but ouer the Phyloſopher: howſoeuer in teaching it may bee queſtionable.

For ſuppoſe it be granted, (that which I ſuppoſe with great reaſon may be denied,) that the Philoſopher in reſpect of his methodical proceeding, doth teach more perfectly then the Poet: yet do I thinke, that no man is ſo much *Philophiloſophos*, as to compare the Philoſopher in moouing, with the Poet.

And that moouing is of a higher degree then teaching, it may by this appeare: that it is wel nigh the cauſe and the effect of teaching. For who will be taught, if hee bee not mooued with deſire to be taught? and what ſo much good doth that teaching bring forth, (I ſpeak ſtill of morrall doctrine) as that it mooueth one to doe that which it dooth teach? for as *Ariſtotle* ſayth, it is not *Gnoſis*, but *Praxis* muſt be the fruit. And howe *Praxis* cannot be, without being mooued to practiſe, it is no hard matter to conſider.

The Philoſopher ſheweth you the way, hee informeth you of the particularities, as well of the tediouſnes of the way, as of the pleaſant lodging you ſhall haue when your iourney is ended, as of the many by-turnings that may diuert you from

from your way. But this is to no man but to him that will read him, and read him with attentiue ſtudious painfulnes. VVhich conſtant deſire, whoſoeuer hath in him, hath already paſt halfe the hardnes of the way, and therefore is beholding to the Philoſopher but for the other halfe. Nay truely, learned men haue learnedly thought, that where once reaſon hath ſo much ouer-maſtred paſsion, as that the minde hath a free deſire to doe well, the inward light each minde hath in it ſelfe, is as good as a Philoſophers booke; ſeeing in nature we know it is wel, to doe well, and what is well, and what is euill, although not in the words of Arte, which Philoſophers beſtowe vpon vs. For out of naturall conceit, the Philoſophers drew it, but to be moued to doe that which wee know, or to be mooued with deſire to knowe, *Hoc opus: Hic labor eſt.*

Nowe therein of all Sciences, (I ſpeak ſtill of humiane, & according to the humiane conceits) is our Poet the Monarch. For he dooth not only ſhow the way, but giueth ſo ſweete a proſpect into the way, as will intice any man to enter into it. Nay, he dooth as if your iourney ſhould lye through a fayre Vineyard, at the firſt giue you a cluſter of Grapes: that full of that taſte, you may long to paſſe further. He beginneth not with obſcure definitions, which muſt blur the margent with interpretations, and load the memory with doubt-

doubtfulneſſe: but hee commeth to you with words ſet in delightfull proportion, either accompanied with, or prepared for the well inchaunting skill of Muſicke; and with a tale forſooth he commeth vnto you: with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney corner. And pretending no more, doth intende the winning of the mind from wickednesse to vertue: euen as the childe is often brought to take moſt wholſom things, by hiding them in ſuch other as haue a pleaſant taſt: which if one ſhould beginne to tell them, the nature of *Aloes*, or *Rubarb* they ſhoulde receiue, woulde ſooner take their Phiſicke at their eares, then at their mouth. So is it in men, (moſt of which are childiſh in the beſt things, till they bee cradled in their graues,) glad they will be to heare the tales of *Hercules*, *Achilles*, *Cyrus*, and *Aeneas*: and hearing them, muſt needs heare the right deſcription of wiſdom, valure, and iuſtice; which, if they had been barely, that is to ſay, Philoſophically ſet out, they would ſweare they bee brought to ſchoole againe.

That imitation wherof Poetry is, hath the moſt conueniency to Nature of all other, in ſomuch, that as *Ariſtotle* ſayth, thoſe things which in themſelues are horrible, as cruell battailes, vnnaturall Monſters, are made in poeticall imitation delightfull. Truely, I haue knowen men, that euen with reading *Amadis de Gaule*, (which God knoweth

knoweth wanteth much of a perfect Poesie,) haue found their harts mooued to the exercise of courtesie, liberalitie, and especially courage.

VVho readeth *Aeneas* carrying olde *Anchises* on his back, that wisheth not it were his fortune to performe so excellent an acte? VVhom doe not the words of *Turnus* mooue? (the tale of *Turnus*, hauing planted his image in the imagination,)

——— *Fugientem hæc terra videbit,*
Vsque adeone mori miserum est? ———

VVhere the Philosophers, as they scorne to delight, so must they bee content little to mooue: sauing wrangling, whether Vertue bee the chiefe, or the onely good: vvhether the contemplatiue, or the actiue life doe excell: vvhich *Plato* and *Boetius* well knew, and therefore made Mistres Philosophy, very often borrow the masking rayment of Poesie. For euen those harde harted euill men, who thinke vertue a schoole name, and knowe no other good, but *indulgere genio*, and therefore despise the austere admonitions of the Philosopher, and feele not the inward reason they stand vpon; yet will be content to be delighted: which is al, the good felow Poet seemeth to promise: and so steale to see the forme of goodnes (which seene they cannot but loue,) ere themselues be aware, as if they tooke a medicine of Cherries. Infinite proofes of the strange effects of this poeticall inuention might

be alledged, onely two ſhall ſerue, which are ſo often remembred, as I thinke all men knowe them.

The one of *Menenius Agrippa*, who when the whole people of Rome had reſolutely deuided themſelues from the Senate, with apparant ſhew of vtter ruine: though hee were (for that time) an excellent Oratour, came not among them, vpon truſt of figuratiue ſpeeches, or cunning inſinuations: and much leſſe, with farre fet *Maximes* of Phyloſophie, which (eſpecially if they were *Platonick*;) they muſt haue learned Geometrie before they could well haue cõceiued: but forſooth he behaues himſelfe, like a homely, and familiar Poet. Hee telleth them a tale, that there was a time, when all the parts of the body made a mutinous conſpiracie againſt the belly, which they thought deuoured the fruits of each others labour: they cõcluded they would let ſo vnprofitable a ſpender ſtarue. In the end, to be ſhort, (for the tale is notorious, and as notorious that it was a tale,) with puniſhing the belly, they plagued themſelues. This applied by him, wrought ſuch effect in the people, as I neuer read, that euer words brought forth but then, ſo ſuddaine & ſo good an alteration: for vpon reaſonable conditions, a perfect reconcileiment enſued. The other is of *Nathan* the Prophet, who whẽ the holie *Dauid* had ſo far forſaken God, as to confirme adulterie with murther: when hee was to doe the tende-

reſt

reſt office of a friende, in laying his owne ſhame before his eyes, ſent by God to call againe ſo choſen a ſeruant: how doth he it? but by telling of a man, whoſe beloued Lambe was vngratefullie taken from his boſome: the applycation moſt diuinely true, but the diſcourſe it ſelfe, fayned: which made *Dauid*, (I ſpeake of the ſecond and inſtrumentall cauſe,) as in a glaſſe, to ſee his own filthines, as that heauenly Pſalme of mercie wel teſtifieth.

By theſe therefore examples and reaſons, I think it may be manifeſt, that the Poet with that ſame hand of delight, doth draw the mind more effectually, then any other Arte dooth, and ſo a concluſion not vnfitlie enſueth: that as vertue is the moſt excellent reſting place for all worldlie learning to make his end of: ſo Poetrie, beeing the moſt familiar to teach it, and moſt princelie to moue towards it, in the moſt excellent work, is the moſt excellent workman. But I am cõtent, not onely to deſcipher him by his workes, (although works in commendation or diſprayſe, muſt euer holde an high authority,) but more narrowly will examine his parts: ſo that (as in a man) though altogether may carry a preſence ful of maieſtie & beautie, perchance in ſome one defectious peece, we may find a blemith: now in his parts, kindes, or *Species*, (as you liſt to terme thẽ) it is to be noted, that ſome Poeſies haue coupled together two or three kindes, as Tragicall

and Comicall, wher-vpon is riſen, the Tragi-comicall. Some in the like manner haue mingled Proſe and Verſe, as *Sanazzar* and *Boetius*. Some haue mingled matters Heroicall & Paſtorall. But that commeth all to one in this queſtion, for if ſeuered they be good, the coniunction cannot be hurtfull. Therefore perchaunce forgetting ſome, & leauing ſome as needleſſe to be remembred, it ſhall not be amiſſe in a worde to cite the ſpeciall kindes, to ſee what faults may be found in the right vſe of them.

Is it then the Paſtorall Poem which is miſliked? (for perchance, where the hedge is loweſt, they will ſooneſt leape ouer.) Is the poore pype diſdained, which ſometime out of *Melibeus* mouth, can ſhewe the miſerie of people, vnder hard Lords, or rauening Souldiours? And again, by *Titirus*, what bleſſednes is deriued to them that lye loweſt from the goodneſſe of them that ſit higheſt? Sometimes, vnder the prettie tales of VVolues and Sheepe, can include the whole conſiderations of wrong dooing and patience. Sometimes ſhew, that contention for trifles, can get but a trifling victorie. VVhere perchaunce a man may ſee, that euen *Alexander* and *Darius*, when they ſtraue who ſhould be Cocke of thys worlds dunghill, the benefit they got, was, that the after-liuers may ſay,

Hæc memini & victum fruſtra contendere Thirſin:
Ex illo Coridon, Coridon eſt tempore nobis.

Or

Or is it the lamenting Elegiack, which in a kinde hart would moue rather pitty thē blame, who bewailes with the great Philoſopher *Heraclitus*, the weakenes of man-kind, and the wretchednes of the world: who ſurely is to be prayſed, either for compaſsionate accompanying iuſt cauſes of lamentation, or for rightly paynting out how weake be the paſsions of wofulneſſe. Is it the bitter, but wholſome Iambick, which rubs the galled minde, in making ſhame the trumpet of villanie, with bolde & open crying out againſt naughtines? Or the Satirick, who

Omne vafer vitium, ridenti tangit amico.

VVho ſportingly neuer leaueth, vntil hee make a man laugh at folly, and at length aſhamed, to laugh at himſelfe: which he cannot auoyd, without auoyding the follie. VVho while

Circum præcordia ludit,

giueth vs to feele, howe many head-aches a paſſionate life bringeth vs to. How whē all is done,

Eſt vlubris animus ſi nos non deficit æquus.

No, perchance it is the Comick, whom naughtie Play-makers and Stage-keepers, haue iuſtly made odious. To the argument of abuſe, I will anſwer after. Onely thus much now is to be ſaid, that the Comedy is an imitation of the common errors of our life, which he repreſenteth, in the moſt ridiculous & ſcornefull ſort that may be. So as it is impoſsible, that any beholder can be content to be ſuch a one.

Now, as in Geometry, the oblique muſt bee knowne as wel as the right: and in Arithmetick, the odde aſwell as the euen, ſo in the actions of our life, who ſeeth not the filthines of euil, wanteth a great foile to perceiue the beauty of vertue. This doth the Comedy handle ſo in our priuate & domeſtical matters, as with hearing it, we get as it were an experience, what is to be looked for of a nigardly *Demea*: of a crafty *Dauus*: of a flattering *Gnato*: of a vaine glorious *Thraſo*: and not onely to know what effects are to be expected, but to know who be ſuch, by the ſignifying badge giuen them by the Comedian. And little reaſon hath any man to ſay, that men learne euill by ſeeing it ſo ſet out: ſith as I ſayd before, there is no man liuing, but by the force trueth hath in nature, no ſooner ſeeth theſe mē play their parts, but wiſheth thē in *Piſtrinum*: although perchance the ſack of his owne faults, lye ſo behinde his back, that he ſeeth not himſelfe daunce the ſame meaſure: whereto, yet nothing can more open his eyes, then to finde his own actions contemptibly ſet forth. So that the right vſe of Comedy will (I thinke) by no body be blamed, and much leſſe of the high and excellent Tragedy, that openeth the greateſt wounds, and ſheweth forth the Vlcers, that are couered with Tiſſue: that maketh Kinges feare to be Tyrants, and Tyrants manifeſt their tirannicall humors: that with ſtirring the affects of admiration and commiſerati-

on,

on, teacheth, the vncertainety of this world, and vpon howe weake foundations guilden roofes are builded. That maketh vs knowe,

Qui sceptra sæuus, duro imperio regit,
Timet timentes, metus in autorem redit.

But how much it can mooue, *Plutarch* yeeldeth a notable testimonie, of the abhominable Tyrant, *Alexander Pheræus*; frō whose eyes, a Tragedy wel made, and represented, drewe aboundance of teares: who without all pitty, had murthered infinite nombers, and some of his owne blood. So as he, that was not ashamed to make matters for Tragedies, yet coulde not resist the sweet violence of a Tragedie.

And if it wrought no further good in him, it was, that he in despight of himselfe, withdrewe himselfe from harkening to that, which might mollifie his hardened hart. But it is not the Tragedy they doe mislike: For it were too absurd to cast out so excellent a representation of whatsoeuer is most worthy to be learned: Is it the Liricke that most displeaseth, who with his tuned Lyre, and wel accorded voyce, giueth praise, the reward of vertue, to vertuous acts? who giues morrall precepts, and naturall Problemes, who sometimes rayseth vp his voice to the height of the heauens, in singing the laudes of the immortall God. Certainly I must confesse my own barbarousnes, I neuer heard the olde song of *Percy* and *Duglas*, that I found not my hart mooued more

more then with a Trumpet: and yet is it ſung but by ſome blinde Crouder, with no rougher voyce, then rude ſtile: which being ſo euill apparrelled in the duſt and cobwebbes of that vnciuill age, what would it worke trymmed in the gorgeous eloquence of *Pindar*? In *Hungary* I haue ſeene it the manner at all Feaſts, and other ſuch meetings, to haue ſonges of their Auncеſtours valour; which that right Souldier-like Nation thinck the chiefeſt kindlers of braue courage. The incomparable *Lacedemonians*, did not only carry that kinde of Muſicke euer with them to the field, but euen at home, as ſuch ſongs were made, ſo were they all content to bee the ſingers of them, when the luſty men were to tell what they dyd; the olde men, what they had done, & the young men what they wold doe. And where a man may ſay, that *Pindar* many times prayſeth highly victories of ſmall moment, matters rather of ſport then vertue: as it may be aunſwered, it was the fault of the Poet, and not of the Poetry; ſo indeede, the chiefe fault was in the tyme and cuſtome of the Greekes, who ſet thoſe toyes at ſo high a price, that *Philip* of *Macedon* reckoned a horſe-race wonne at *Olimpus*, among hys three fearefull felicities. But as the vnimitable *Pindar* often did, ſo is that kinde moſt capable and moſt fit, to awake the thoughts from the ſleep of idlenes, to imbrace honorable enterpriſes.

There reſts the Heroicall, whoſe very name

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(I thinke) ſhould daunt all back-biters; for by what conceit can a tongue be directed to ſpeake euill of that, which draweth with it, no leſſe Champions then *Achilles*, *Cyrus*, *Aeneas*, *Turnus*, *Tideus*, and *Rinaldo*? who doth not only teach and moue to a truth, but teacheth and mooueth to the moſt high and excellent truth. VVho maketh magnanimity and iuſtice ſhine, throughout all miſty fearefulnes and foggy deſires. VVho, if the ſaying of *Plato* and *Tullie* bee true, that who could ſee Vertue, would be wonderfully rauiſhed with the loue of her beauty: this man ſets her out to make her more louely in her holyday apparell, to the eye of any that will daine, not to diſdaine, vntill they vnderſtand. But if anything be already ſayd in the defence of ſweete Poetry, all concurreth to the maintaining the Heroicall, which is not onely a kinde, but the beſt, and moſt accompliſhed kinde of Poetry. For as the image of each action ſtirreth and inſtructeth the mind, ſo the loftie image of ſuch VVorthies, moſt inflameth the mind with deſire to be worthy, and informes with counſel how to be worthy. Only let *Aeneas* be worne in the tablet of your memory, how he gouerneth himſelfe in the ruine of his Country, in the preſeruing his old Father, & carrying away his religious ceremonies: in obeying the Gods commandement to leaue *Dido*, though not onely all paſſionate kindenes, but euen the humane conſideration of vertuous gratefulnes,

would haue craued other of him. How in ſtorms, howe in ſports, howe in warre, howe in peace, how a fugitiue, how victorious, how beſiedged, how beſiedging, howe to ſtrangers, howe to allyes, how to enemies, howe to his owne: laſtly, how in his inward ſelfe, and how in his outward gouernment. And I thinke, in a minde not preiudiced with a preiudicating humor, hee will be found in excellencie fruitefull: yea, euen as *Horace* ſayth,

Melius Chriſippo et Crantore.

But truely I imagine, it falleth out with theſe Poet-whyppers, as with ſome good women, who often are ſicke, but in fayth they cannot tel where. So the name of Poetrie is odious to thē, but neither his cauſe, nor effects, neither the ſum that containes him, nor the particularities deſcending from him, giue any faſt handle to their carping diſprayſe.

Sith then Poetrie is of all humane learning the moſt auncient, & of moſt fatherly antiquitie, as frō whence other learnings haue taken theyr beginnings: ſith it is ſo vniuerſall, that no learned Nation dooth deſpiſe it, nor no barbarous Nation is without it: ſith both Roman & Greek gaue diuine names vnto it: the one of propheeying, the other of making. And that indeede, that name of making is fit for him; conſidering, that where as other Arts retaine thēſelues within their ſubiect, and receiue as it were, their beeing

ing from it: the Poet onely, bringeth his owne ſtuffe, and dooth not learne a conceite out of a matter, but maketh matter for a conceite: Sith neither his deſcription, nor his ende, contayneth any euill, the thing deſcribed cannot be euil: Sith his effects be ſo good as to teach goodnes and to delight the learners: Sith therin, (namely in morall doctrine, the chiefe of all knowledges,) hee dooth not onely farre paſſe the Hiſtorian, but for inſtructing, is well nigh comparable to the Philoſopher: & for mouing, leaues him behind him: Sith the holy ſcripture (wherein there is no vncleannes) hath whole parts in it poeticall. And that euen our Sauiour Chriſt, vouchſafed to vſe the flowers of it: Sith all his kindes are not onlie in their vnited formes, but in their ſeuered diſſections fully commendable, I think, (& think I thinke rightly,) the Lawrell crowne appointed for tryumphing Captaines, doth worthilie (of al other learnings) honor the Poets tryumph. But becauſe wee haue eares aſwell as tongues, and that the lighteſt reaſons that may be, will ſeeme to weigh greatly, if nothing be put in the counter-ballance: let vs heare, and aſwell as wee can ponder, what obiections may bee made againſt this Arte, which may be worthy, eyther of yeelding, or anſwering.

Firſt truely I note, not onely in theſe *Myſomouſoi* Poet-haters, but in all that kinde of people, who ſeek a prayſe by diſprayſing others, that

they doe prodigally spend a great many wandering wordes, in quips, and scoffes, carping and taunting at each thing, which by styrring the Spleene, may stay the braine from a through beholding the worthines of the subiect.

Those kinde of obiections, as they are full of very idle easines, fith there is nothing of so sacred a maiestie, but that an itching tongue may rubbe it selfe vpon it: so deserue they no other answer, but in steed of laughing at the iest, to laugh at the iester. VVee know a playing wit, can prayse the discretion of an Asse, the comfortablenes of being in debt, and the iolly commoditie of beeing sick of the plague. So of the contrary side, if we will turne *Ouids* verse,

Vt latent virtus, proximitate mali,

That good lye hid in neerenesse of the euill: *Agrippa* will be as merry in shewing the vanitie of Science, as *Erasmus* was in commending of follie. Neyther shall any man or matter escape some touch of these smyling raylers. But for *Erasmus* and *Agrippa*, they had another foundation then the superficiall part would promise. Mary, these other pleasant Fault-finders, who wil correct the Verbe, before they vnderstand the Noune, and confute others knowledge before they confirme theyr owne: I would haue them onely remember, that scoffing commeth not of wisedom: So as the best title in true English they gette with their merriments, is to be called good fooles: for

so

so haue our graue Fore-fathers euer termed that humorous kinde of iesters: but that which gyueth greateſt ſcope to their ſcorning humors, is ryming and verſing. It is already ſayde, (and as I think, trulie ſayde,) it is not ryming and verſing, that maketh Poeſie. One may bee a Poet without verſing, and a verſifyer without Poetry. But yet, preſuppoſe it were inſeparable (as indeede it ſeemeth *Scaliger* iudgeth,) truelie it were an inſeparable cõmendation. For if *Oratio*, next to *Ratia*, Speech next to Reaſon, bee the greateſt gyft beſtowed vpon mortalitie: that can not be praiſeleſſe, which dooth moſt polliſh that bleſsing of ſpeech, which conſiders each word, not only (as a man may ſay) by his ſeuerable qualitie, but by his beſt meaſured quantitie, carrying euen in themſelues a Harmonie: (without perchaunce) Number, Meaſure, Order, Proportion, be in our time growne odious. But lay aſide the firſt praiſe it hath, by beeing the onely fit ſpeech for Muſick, (Muſick I ſay, the moſt diuine ſtriker of the ſences:) thus much is vndoubtedly true, that if reading bee foolish, without remembring, memorie being the onely treaſurer of knowledge, thoſe words which are fitteſt for memory, are likewiſe moſt conuenient for knowledge.

Now, that Verſe farre exceedeth Proſe in the knitting vp of the memory, the reaſon is manifeſt. The words, (beſides their delight which hath a

great affinitie to memory,) beeing ſo ſet, as one word cannot be loſt, but the whole worke failes: which accuſeth it ſelfe, calleth the remembrance backe to it ſelfe, and ſo moſt ſtrongly confirmeth it; beſides, one word ſo as it were begetting another, as be it in ryme or meaſured verſe, by the former a man ſhall haue a neere geſſe to the follower: laſtly, euen they that haue taught the Art of memory, haue ſhewed nothing ſo apt for it, as a certaine roome deuided into many places well and throughly knowne. Now, that hath the verſe in effect perfectly: euery word hauing his naturall ſeate, which ſeate, muſt needes make the words remembred. But what needeth more in a thing ſo knowne to all men? who is it that euer was a ſcholler, that doth not carry away ſome verſes of *Virgill*, *Horace*, or *Cato*, which in his youth he learned, and euen to his old age ſerue him for howrely leſſons? but the fitnes it hath for memory, is notably proued by all deliuery of Arts: wherin for the moſt part, from Grammer, to Logick, Mathematick, Phiſick, and the reſt, the rules chiefely neceſſary to bee borne away, are compiled in verſes. So that, verſe being in it ſelfe ſweete and orderly, and being beſt for memory, the onely handle of knowledge, it muſt be in ieſt that any man can ſpeake againſt it. Nowe then goe wee to the moſt important imputations laid to the poore Poets, for ought I can yet learne, they are theſe, firſt, that there beeing

many

many other more fruitefull knowledges, a man might better ſpend his tyme in them, then in this. Secondly, that it is the mother of lyes. Thirdly, that it is the Nurſe of abuſe, infecting vs with many peſtilent deſires: with a Syrens ſweetnes, drawing the mind to the Serpents tayle of ſinfull fancy. And heerein eſpecially, Comedies giue the largeſt field to erre, as *Chaucer* ſayth: howe both in other Nations and in ours, before Poets did ſoften vs, we were full of courage, giuen to martiall exerciſes; the pillers of manlyke liberty, & not lulled a ſleepe in ſhady idlenes with Poets paſtimes. And laſtly, and chiefely, they cry out with an open mouth, as if they had out ſhot *Robin Hood*, that *Plato* baniſhed them out of hys Common-wealth. Truely, this is much, if there be much truth in it. Firſt to the firſt: that a man might better ſpend his tyme, is a reaſon indeede: but it doth (as they ſay) but *Petere principium*: for if it be as I affirme, that no learning is ſo good, as that which teacheth and mooueth to vertue; and that none can both teach and moue thereto ſo much as Poetry: then is the concluſion manifeſt, that Incke and Paper cannot be to a more profitable purpoſe employed. And certainly, though a man ſhould graunt their firſt aſſumption, it ſhould followe (me thinkes) very vnwillingly, that good is not good, becauſe better is better. But I ſtill and vtterly denye, that there is ſprong out of earth a more fruitefull know-

knowledge. To the ſecond therefore, that they ſhould be the principall lyars; I aunſwere paradoxically, but truely, I thinke truely; that of all VVriters vnder the ſunne, the Poet is the leaſt lier: and though he would, as a Poet can ſcarcely be a lyer, the Aſtronomer, with his cooſen the Geometrician, can hardly eſcape, when they take vpon them to meaſure the height of the ſtarres.

How often, thinke you, doe the Phiſitians lye, when they auer things, good for ſicknesſes; which afterwards ſend *Charon* a great nomber of ſoules drownd in a potion before they come to his Ferry: And no leſſe of the reſt, which take vpon them to affirme. Now, for the Poet, he nothing affirmes; and therefore neuer lyeth. For, as I take it, to lye, is to affirme that to be true which is falſe. So as the other Artiſts, and eſpecially the Hiſtorian, affirming many things, can in the cloudy knowledge of mankinde, hardly eſcape from many lyes. But the Poet as (I ſayd before) neuer affirmeth. The Poet neuer maketh any circles about your imagination, to coniure you to beleeue for true what he writes. Hee citeth not authorities of other Hiſtories, but euen for hys entry, calleth the ſweete Muſes to inſpire into him a good inuention: in troth, not labouring to tell you what is, or is not, but what ſhould or ſhould not be: and therefore, though he recount things not true, yet becauſe hee telleth them not

for

for true, he lyeth not, without we will ſay, that *Nathan* lyed in his ſpeech, before alledged to *Dauid*. VVhich as a wicked man durſt ſcarce ſay, ſo think I, none ſo ſimple would ſay, that *Eſope* lyed in the tales of his beaſts: for who thinks that *Eſope* writ it for actually true, were well worthy to haue his name cronicled among the beaſtes hee writeth of.

VVhat childe is there, that cõming to a Play, and ſeeing *Thebes* written in great Letters vpon an olde doore, doth beleeue that it is *Thebes*? If then, a man can ariue, at that childs age, to know that the Poets perſons and dooings, are but pictures what ſhould be, and not ſtories what haue beene, they will neuer giue the lye, to things not affirmatiuely, but allegorically, and figuratiuelie written. And therefore, as in Hiſtorie, looking for trueth, they goe away full fraught with falſhood: ſo in Poeſie, looking for fiction, they ſhal vſe the narration, but as an imaginatiue ground-plot of a profitable inuention.

But heereto is replyed, that the Poets gyue names to men they write of, which argueth a conceite of an actuall truth, and ſo, not beeing true, prooues a falſhood. And doth the Lawyer lye then, when vnder the names of *Iohn a ſtile*, and *Iohn a noakes*, hee puts his caſe? But that is eaſily anſwered. Theyr naming of men, is but to make theyr picture the more liuely, and not to builde any hiſtorie: paynting men, they cannot

leaue men nameleſſe. VVe ſee we cannot play at Cheſſe, but that wee muſt giue names to our Cheſſe-men; and yet mee thinks, hee were a very partiall Champion of truth, that would ſay we lyed, for giuing a peece of wood, the reuerend title of a Biſhop. The Poet nameth *Cyrus* or *Aeneas*, no other way, then to ſhewe, what men of theyr fames, fortunes, and eſtates, ſhould doe.

3. Their third is, howe much it abuſeth mens wit, trayning it to wanton ſinfulnes, and luſtfull loue: for indeed that is the principall, if not the onely abuſe I can heare alledged. They ſay, the Comedies rather teach, then reprehend, amorous conceits. They ſay, the Lirick, is larded with paſsionate Sonnets. The Elegiack, weepes the want of his Miſtreſſe. And that euen to the Heroical, *Cupid* hath ambitiouſly climed. Alas Loue, I would, thou couldeſt as well defende thy ſelfe, as thou canſt offende others. I would thoſe, on whom thou dooſt attend, could eyther put thee away, or yeelde good reaſon, why they keepe thee. But grant loue of beautie, to be a beaſtlie fault, (although it be very hard, ſith onely man, and no beaſt, hath that gyft, to diſcerne beauty.) Grant, that louely name of Loue, to deſerue all hateful reproches: (although euen ſome of my Maiſters the Philoſophers, ſpent a good deale of theyr Lamp-oyle, in ſetting foorth the excellencie of it.) Grant, I ſay, what ſoeuer they wil haue granted; that not onely loue, but luſt, but vanitie,

nitie, but, (if they liſt) ſcurrilitie, poſſeſſeth many leaues of the Poets bookes: yet thinke I, when this is granted, they will finde, theyr ſentence may with good manners, put the laſt words formoſt: and not ſay, that Poetrie abuſeth mans wit, but that, mans wit abuſeth Poetrie.

For I will not denie, but that mans wit may make Poeſie, (which ſhould be *Eikaſtike*, which ſome learned haue defined, figuring foorth good things,) to bee *Phantaſtike*: which doth contrariwiſe, infect the fancie with vnworthy obiects. As the Painter, that ſhoulde giue to the eye, eyther ſome excellent perſpectiue, or ſome fine picture, fit for building or fortification: or contayning in it ſome notable example, as *Abraham*, ſacrificing his Sonne *Iſaack*, *Iudith* killing *Holoſernes*, *Dauid* fighting with *Goliah*, may leaue thoſe, and pleaſe an ill-pleaſed eye, with wanton ſhewes of better hidden matters. But what, ſhall the abuſe of a thing, make the right vſe odious? Nay truely, though I yeeld, that Poeſie may not onely be abuſed, but that beeing abuſed, by the reaſon of his ſweete charming force, it can doe more hurt then any other Armie of words: yet ſhall it be ſo far from concluding, that the abuſe, ſhould giue reproch to the abuſed, that contrariwiſe it is a good reaſon, that whatſoeuer being abuſed, dooth moſt harme, beeing rightly vſed: (and vpon the right vſe each thing conceiueth his title,) doth moſt good.

Doe wee not ſee the skill of Phiſick, (the beſt rampire to our often-aſſaulted bodies,) beeing abuſed, teach poyſon the moſt violent deſtroyer? Dooth not knowledge of Law, whoſe end is, to euen and right all things being abuſed, grow the crooked foſterer of horrible iniuries? Doth not (to goe to the higheſt) Gods word abuſed, breed hereſie? and his Name abuſed, become blaſphemie? Truely, a needle cannot doe much hurt, and as truely, (with leaue of Ladies be it ſpoken) it cannot doe much good. VVith a ſword, thou maiſt kill thy Father, & with a ſword thou maiſt defende thy Prince and Country. So that, as in their calling Poets the Fathers of lyes, they ſay nothing: ſo in this theyr argument of abuſe, they prooue the commendation.

They alledge heere-with, that before Poets beganne to be in ptice, our Nation, hath ſet their harts delight vpon action, and not vpon imagination: rather doing things worthy to bee written, then writing things fitte to be done. VVhat that before tyme was, I thinke ſcarcely *Sphinx* can tell: Sith no memory is ſo auncient, that hath the precedence of Poetrie. And certaine it is, that in our plaineſt homelines, yet neuer was the *Albion* Nation without Poetrie. Mary, thys argument, though it bee leaueld againſt Poetrie, yet is it indeed, a chaine-ſhot againſt all learning, or bookiſhnes, as they commonly tearme it. Of ſuch minde were certaine *Gothes*, of whom it is

written,

written, that hauing in the ſpoile of a famous Citie, taken a fayre librarie; one hangman (bee like fitte to execute the fruites of their wits,) who had murthered a great number of bodies, would haue ſet fire on it: no ſayde another, very grauely, take heede what you doe, for whyle they are buſie about theſe toyes, wee ſhall with more leyſure conquer their Countries.

This indeede is the ordinary doctrine of ignorance, and many wordes ſometymes I haue heard ſpent in it; but becauſe this reaſon is generally againſt all learning, aſwell as Poetrie; or rather, all learning but Poetry: becauſe it were too large a digreſsion, to handle, or at leaſt, to ſuperfluous: (ſith it is manifeſt, that all gouernment of action, is to be gotten by knowledg, and knowledge beſt, by gathering many knowledges, which is, reading,) I onely with *Horace*, to him that is of that opinion,

Iubeo ſtultum eſſe libenter:

for as for Poetrie it ſelfe, it is the freeſt from thys obiection. For Poetrie is the companion of Campes.

I dare vndertake, *Orlando Furioſo*, or honeſt King *Arthur*, will neuer diſpleaſe a Souldier: but the quiddity of *Ens*, and *Prima materia*, will hardely agree with a Corſlet: and therefore, as I ſaid in the beginning, euen Turks and Tartares are delighted with Poets. *Homer* a Greek, floriſhed, before Greece floriſhed. And if to a ſlight

coniecture, a coniecture may be oppoſed: truly it may ſeeme, that as by him, their learned men, tooke almoſt their firſt light of knowledge, ſo their actiue men, receiued their firſt motions of courage. Onlie *Alexanders* example may ſerue, who by *Plutarch* is accounted of ſuch vertue, that Fortune was not his guide, but his foote-ſtoole: whoſe acts ſpeake for him, though *Plutarch* did not: indeede, the Phœnix of warlike Princes. This *Alexander*, left his Schoolemaiſter, liuing *Ariſtotle*, behinde him, but tooke deade *Homer* with him: he put the Philoſopher *Caliſthenes* to death, for his ſeeming philoſophicall, indeed mutinous ſtubburnnes. But the chiefe thing he euer was heard to wiſh for, was, that *Homer* had been aliue. He well found, he receiued more brauerie of minde, by the patterne of *Achilles*, then by hearing the definition of Fortitude: and therefore, if *Cato* miſliked *Fuluius*, for carying *Ennius* with him to the fielde, it may be aunſwered, that if *Cato* miſliked it, the noble *Fuluius* liked it, or els he had not doone it: for it was not the excellent *Cato Vticenſis*, (whoſe authority I would much more haue reuerenced,) but it was the former: in truth, a bitter puniſher of faults, but elſe, a man that had neuer wel ſacrificed to the Graces. Hee miſliked and cryed out vpon all Greeke learning, and yet being 80. yeeres olde, began to learne it. Be-like, fearing that *Pluto* vnderſtood not Latine. Indeede, the Romaine lawes allowed, no per-

ſon

ſon to be carried to the warres, but hee that was in the Souldiers role: and therefore, though *Cato* miſliked his vnmuſtered perſon, hee miſliked not his worke. And if hee had, *Scipio Naſica* iudged by common conſent, the beſt Romaine, loued him. Both the other *Scipio* Brothers, who had by their vertues no leſſe ſurnames, then of *Aſia*, and *Affrick*, ſo loued him, that they cauſed his body to be buried in their Sepulcher. So as *Cato*, his authoritie being but againſt his perſon, and that aunſwered, with ſo farre greater then himſelfe, is heerein of no validitie. But now indeede my burthen is great; now *Plato* his name is layde vpon mee, whom I muſt confeſſe, of all Philoſophers, I haue euer eſteemed moſt worthy of reuerence, and with great reaſon: Sith of all Philoſophers, he is the moſt poeticall. Yet if he will defile the Fountaine, out of which his flowing ſtreames haue proceeded, let vs boldly examine with what reaſons hee did it. Firſt truly, a man might maliciouſly obiect, that *Plato* being a Philoſopher, was a naturall enemie of Poets: for indeede, after the Philoſophers, had picked out of the ſweete miſteries of Poetrie, the right diſcerning true points of knowledge, they forthwith putting it in method, & making a Schoole-arte of that which the Poets did onely teach, by a diuine delightfulnes, beginning to ſpurne at their guides, like vngratefull Prentiſes, were not content to ſet vp ſhops for themſelues, but ſought by

all

all meanes to diſcredit their Maiſters. VVhich by the force of delight beeing barred them, the leſſe they could ouerthrow them, the more they hated them. For indeede, they found for *Homer*, ſeauen Citties ſtroue, who ſhould haue him for their Citizen: where many Citties baniſhed Philoſophers, as not fitte members to liue among them. For onely repeating certaine of *Euripides* verſes, many *Athenians* had their lyues ſaued of the *Siracuſians*: when the *Athenians* themſelues, thought many Philoſophers, vnwoorthie to liue.

Certaine Poets, as *Simonides*, and *Pindarus*, had ſo preuailed with *Hiero* the firſt, that of a Tirant they made him a iuſt King, where *Plato* could do ſo little with *Dioniſius*, that he himſelfe, of a Philoſopher, was made a ſlaue. But who ſhould doe thus, I confeſſe, ſhould requite the obiections made againſt Poets, with like cauillation againſt Philoſophers, as likewiſe one ſhould doe, that ſhould bid one read *Phadrus*, or *Sympoſium* in *Plato*, or the diſcourſe of loue in *Plutarch*, and ſee whether any Poet doe authorize abhominable filthines, as they doe. Againe, a man might aske out of what Common-wealth *Plato* did baniſh them? inſooth, thence where he himſelfe alloweth communitie of women: So as belike, this baniſhment grewe not for effeminate wantonnes, ſith little ſhould poeticall Sonnets be hurtfull, when a man might haue what woman

man he liſted. But I honor philoſophicall inſtructions, and bleſſe the wits which bred them: ſo as they be not abuſed, which is likewiſe ſtretched to Poetrie.

S. *Paule* himſelfe, (who yet for the credite of Poets) alledgeth twiſe two Poets, & one of them by the name of a Prophet, ſetteth a watch-word vpon Philoſophy, indeede vpon the abuſe. So dooth *Plato*, vpon the abuſe, not vpon Poetrie. *Plato* found fault, that the Poets of his time, filled the worlde, with wrong opinions of the Gods, making light tales of that vnſpotted eſſence; and therefore, would not haue the youth depraued with ſuch opinions. Heerin may much be ſaid, let this ſuffice: the Poets did not induce ſuch opinions, but dyd imitate thoſe opinions already induced. For all the Greek ſtories can well teſtifie, that the very religion of that time, ſtoode vpon many, and many-faſhioned Gods, not taught ſo by the Poets, but followed, according to their nature of imitation. VVho liſt, may reade in *Plutarch*, the diſcourſes of *Iſis*, and *Oſiris*, of the cauſe why Oracles ceaſed, of the diuine prouidence: and ſee, whether the Theologie of that nation, ſtood not vpon ſuch dreames, which the Poets indeed ſuperſticiouſly obſerued: and truly, (ſith they had not the light of Chriſt,) did much better in it then the Philoſophers, who ſhaking off ſuperſtition, brought in Atheiſme. *Plato* therefore, (whoſe authoritie I had much

rather iustly conster, then vniustly resist,) meant not in general of Poets, in those words of which *Iulius Scaliger* saith, *Quæ authoritate, barbari quidã, atque hispidi, abuti velint, ad Poetas republica exigendos*: but only meant, to driue out those wrong opinions of the Deitie, (whereof now, without further law, Christianity hath taken away all the hurtful beliefe,) perchance (as he thought) norished by the then esteemed Poets. And a man neede goe no further then to *Plato* himselfe, to know his meaning: who in his Dialogue called *Ion*, giueth high, and rightly diuine commendation to Poetrie. So as *Plato*, banishing the abuse, not the thing, not banishing it, but giuing due honor vnto it, shall be our Patron, and not our aduersarie. For indeed I had much rather, (sith truly I may doe it) shew their mistaking of *Plato*, (vnder whose Lyons skin they would make an Asse-like braying against Poesie,) the goe about to ouer-throw his authority, whom the wiser a man is, the more iust cause he shall find to haue in admiration: especially, sith he attributeth vnto Poesie, more then my selfe doe; namely, to be a very inspiring of a diuine force, farre aboue mans wit; as in the afore-named Dialogue is apparant.

Of the other side, who wold shew the honors, haue been by the best sort of iudgemẽts granted them, a whole Sea of examples would present themselues. *Alexanders, Cæsars, Scipios*, all fauorers

of

of Poets. *Lælius*, called the Romane *Socrates*, him ſelfe a Poet: ſo as part of *Heautontimorumenon* in *Terence*, was ſuppoſed to be made by him. And euen the Greek *Socrates*, whom *Apollo* confirmed to be the onely wiſe man, is ſayde to haue ſpent part of his old time, in putting *Eſops* fables into verſes. And therefore, full euill ſhould it become his ſcholler *Plato*, to put ſuch words in his Maiſters mouth, againſt Poets. But what need more? *Ariſtotle* writes the Arte of Poeſie: and why if it ſhould not be written? *Plutarch* teacheth the vſe to be gathered of thē, and how if they ſhould not be read? And who reades *Plutarchs* eyther hiſtorie or philoſophy, ſhall finde, hee trymmeth both theyr garments, with gards of Poeſie. But I liſt not to defend Poeſie, with the helpe of her vnderling, Hiſtoriography. Let it ſuffiſe, that it is a fit ſoyle for prayſe to dwell vpon: and what diſpraiſe may ſet vpon it, is eyther eaſily ouer-come, or transformed into iuſt commendation. So that, ſith the excellencies of it, may be ſo eaſily, and ſo iuſtly confirmed, & the low-creeping obiections, ſo ſoone troden downe; it not being an Art of lyes, but of true doctrine: not of effeminatenes, but of notable ſtirring of courage: not of abuſing mans witte, but of ſtrengthning mans wit: not baniſhed, but honored by *Plato*: let vs rather plant more Laurels, for to engarland our Poets heads, (which honor of beeing laureat, as beſides thē, onely tryumphant Captaines weare,

is a ſufficient authority, to ſhewe the price they ought to be had in,) then ſuffer the ill-ſauouring breath of ſuch wrong-ſpeakers, once to blowe vpon the cleere ſprings of Poeſie.

But ſith I haue runne ſo long a careere in this matter, me thinks, before I giue my penne a full ſtop, it ſhalbe but a little more loſt time, to inquire, why England, (the Mother of excellent mindes,) ſhould bee growne ſo hard a ſtep-mother to Poets, vvho certainly in wit ought to paſſe all other: ſith all onely proceedeth frō their wit, being indeede makers of themſelues, not takers of others. How can I but exclaime,

Muſa mihi cauſas memora, quo numine læſo.

Sweete Poeſie, that hath aunciently had Kings, Emperors, Senators, great Captaines, ſuch, as beſides a thouſand others, *Dauid*, *Adrian*, *Sophocles*, *Germanicus*, not onely to fauour Poets, but to be Poets. And of our neerer times, can preſent for her Patrons, a *Robert*, king of Sicil, the great king *Francis* of France, king *Iames* of Scotland. Such Cardinals as *Bembus*, and *Bibiena*. Such famous Preachers & Teachers, as *Beza* and *Melanchon*. So learned Philoſophers, as *Fracaſtorius* and *Scaliger*. So great Orators, as *Pontanus* & *Muretus*. So piercing wits, as *George Buchanan*. So graue Counſellors, as beſides many, but before all, that *Hoſpitall* of Fraunce: then whom, (I thinke) that Realme neuer brought forth a more accompliſhed iudgement: more firmely builded vpon vertue.

vertue. I ſay theſe, with numbers of others, not onely to read others Poeſies, but to poetiſe for others reading, that Poeſie thus embraced in all other places, ſhould onely finde in our time, a hard welcome in England, I thinke the very earth lamenteth it, and therfore decketh our Soyle with fewer Laurels then it was accuſtomed. For heertofore, Poets haue in England alſo floriſhed. And which is to be noted, euen in thoſe times, when the trumpet of *Mars* did ſounde loudeſt. And now, that an ouer-faint quietnes ſhould ſeeme to ſtrew the houſe for Poets, they are almoſt in as good reputation, as the *Mountibancks* at *Venice*. Truly euen that, as of the one ſide, it giueth great praiſe to Poeſie, which like *Venus*, (but to better purpoſe,) had rather be troubled in the net with *Mars*, then enioy the homelie quiet of *Vulcan*: ſo ſerues it for a peece of a reaſon, why they are leſſe gratefull to idle England, which nowe can ſcarce endure the payne of a pen. Vpon this, neceſſarily followeth, that baſe men, with ſeruile wits vndertake it: who think it inough, if they can be rewarded of the Printer. And ſo as *Epaminondas* is ſayd, with the honor of his vertue, to haue made an office; by his exerciſing it, which before was contemptible, to become highly reſpected: ſo theſe, no more but ſetting their names to it, by their owne diſgracefulnes, diſgrace the moſt gracefull Poeſie. For now, as if all the Muſes were gotte with childe, to bring

foorth baſtard Poets, without any commiſsion, they doe poſte ouer the banckes of *Helicon*, tyll they make the readers more weary then Poſt-horſes: while in the meane tyme, they

Queis meliore luto finxit præcordia Titan,

are better content, to ſuppreſſe the out-flowing of their wit, then by publiſhing them, to bee accounted Knights of the ſame order. But I, that before euer I durſt aſpire vnto the dignitie, am admitted into the company of the Paper-blurrers, doe finde the very true cauſe of our wanting eſtimation, is want of deſert: taking vpon vs to be Poets, in deſpight of *Pallas*. Nowe, wherein we want deſert, were a thanke-worthy labour to expreſſe: but if I knew, I ſhould haue mended my ſelfe. But I, as I neuer deſired the title, ſo haue I neglected the meanes to come by it. Onely ouer-maſtred by ſome thoughts, I yeelded an inckie tribute vnto them. Mary, they that delight in Poeſie it ſelfe, ſhould ſeeke to knowe what they doe, and how they doe; and eſpecially, looke themſelues in an vnflattering Glaſſe of reaſon, if they bee inclinable vnto it. For Poeſie, muſt not be drawne by the eares, it muſt bee gently led; or rather, it muſt lead. VVhich was partly the cauſe, that made the auncient-learned affirme, it was a diuine gift, and no humaine skill: ſith all other knowledges, lie ready for any that hath ſtrength of witte: A Poet, no induſtrie can make, if his owne *Genius* bee not carried vnto it:

and

and therefore is it an old Prouerbe, *Orator fit*; *Poeta naſcitur*. Yet confeſſe I alwayes, that as the firtileſt grounde muſt bee manured, ſo muſt the highēſt flying wit, haue a *Dedalus* to guide him. That *Dedalus*, they ſay, both in this, and in other, hath three wings, to beare it ſelfe vp into the ayre of due commendation: that is, Arte, Imitation, and Exerciſe. But theſe, neyther artificiall rules, nor imitatiue patternes, we much cumber our ſelues withall. Exerciſe indeede wee doe, but that, very fore-backwardly: for where we ſhould exerciſe to know, wee exerciſe as hauing knowne: and ſo is our braine deliuered of much matter, which neuer was begottē by knowledge. For, there being two principal parts, matter to be expreſſed by wordes, and words to expreſſe the matter, in neyther, wee vſe Arte, or Imitation, rightly. Our matter is *Quodlibit* indeed, though wrongly perfourming *Ouids* verſe:

(*Quicquid conabor diſcere verſus erit:*)

neuer marſhalling it into an aſſured rancke, that almoſt the readers cannot tell where to finde themſelues.

Chaucer, vndoubtedly did excellently in hys *Troylus* and *Creſſeid*; of whom, truly I know not, whether to meruaile more, either that he in that miſtie time, could ſee ſo clearely, or that wee in this cleare age, walke ſo ſtumblingly after him. Yet had he great wants, fitte to be forgiuen, in ſo reuerent antiquity. I account the *Mirrour of*

Magi-

Magiſtrates, meetely furniſhed of beautiful partes: and in the Earle of Surries *Liricks*, many things taſting of a noble birth, and worthy of a noble minde. The *Sheapheards Kalender*, hath much Poetrie in his Eglogues: indeede worthy the reading if I be not deceiued. That ſame framing of his ſtile, to an old ruſtick language, I dare not alowe, ſith neyther *Theocritus* in Greeke, *Virgill* in Latine, nor *Sanazar* in Italian, did affect it. Beſides theſe, doe I not remember to haue ſeene but fewe, (to ſpeake boldely) printed, that haue poeticall ſinnewes in them: for proofe whereof, let but moſt of the verſes bee put in Proſe, and then aske the meaning; and it will be found, that one verſe did but beget another, without ordering at the firſt, what ſhould be at the laſt: which becomes a confuſed maſſe of words, with a tingling ſound of ryme, barely accompanied with reaſon.

Our Tragedies, and Comedies, (not without cauſe cried out againſt,) obſeruing rules, neyther of honeſt ciuilitie, nor of skilfull Poetrie, excepting *Gorboduck*, (againe, I ſay, of thoſe that I haue ſeene,) which notwithſtanding, as it is full of ſtately ſpeeches, and well ſounding Phraſes, clyming to the height of *Seneca* his ſtile, and as full of notable moralitie, which it doth moſt delightfully teach; and ſo obtayne the very end of Poeſie: yet in troth it is very defectious in the circumſtaunces; which greeueth mee, becauſe it might

might not remaine as an exact model of all Tragedies. For it is faulty both in place, & time, the two neceſſary companions of all corporall actions. For where the ſtage ſhould alwaies repreſent but one place, and the vttermoſt time preſuppoſed in it, ſhould be, both by *Ariſtotles* precept, and common reaſon, but one day: there is both many dayes, and many places, inartificially imagined. But if it be ſo in *Gorboduck*, how much more in al the reſt? where you ſhal haue *Aſia* of the one ſide, and *Affrick* of the other, & ſo many other vnder-kingdoms, that the Player, when he cõmeth in, muſt euer begin with telling where he is: or els, the tale wil not be conceiued. Now ye ſhal haue three Ladies, walke to gather flowers, & then wee muſt beleeue the ſtage to be a Garden. By & by, we heare newes of ſhipwracke in the ſame place, and then wee are to blame, if we accept it not for a Rock.

Vpon the backe of that, comes out a hidious Monſter, with fire and ſmoke, and then the miſerable beholders, are bounde to take it for a Caue. VVhile in the meane-time, two Armies flye in, repreſented with foure ſwords and bucklers, & then what harde heart wil not receiue it for a pitched fielde? Now, of time they are much more liberall, for ordinary it is that two young Princes fall in loue. After many traueres, ſhe is got with childe, deliuered of a faire boy, he is loſt, groweth a man, falls in loue, & is ready to get another child, and all this in two houres ſpace: which how abſurd it is

in ſence, euen ſence may imagine, and Arte hath taught, and all auncient examples iuſtified: and at this day, the ordinary Players in Italie, wil not erre in. Yet wil ſome bring in an example of *Eunuchus* in *Terence*, that cõtaineth matter of two dayes, yet far ſhort of twenty yeeres. True it is, and ſo was it to be playd in two daies, and ſo fitted to the time it ſet forth. And though *Plautus* hath in one place done amiſſe, let vs hit with him, and not miſſe with him. But they wil ſay, how then ſhal we ſet forth a ſtory, which containeth both many places, & many times? And doe they not knowe, that a Tragedie is tied to the lawes of Poeſie, and not of Hiſtorie? not bound to follow the ſtorie, but hauing liberty, either to faine a quite newe matter, or to frame the hiſtory, to the moſt tragicall conueniencie. Againe, many things may be told, which cannot be ſhewed, if they knowe the difference betwixt reporting and repreſenting. As for example, I may ſpeake, (though I am heere) of *Peru*, and in ſpeech, digreſſe from that, to the diſcription of *Calicut*: but in action, I cannot repreſent it without *Pacolets* horſe: and ſo was the manner the Auncients tooke, by ſome *Nuncius*, to recount thinges done in former time, or other place. Laſtly, if they wil repreſent an hiſtory, they muſt not (as *Horace* ſaith) begin *Ab ouo*: but they muſt come to the principall poynt of that one action, which they wil repreſent. By example this wil be beſt expreſſed. I haue a ſtory of young *Polidorus*, deliuered

for

for ſafeties ſake, with great riches ; by his Father *Priamus*, to *Polimneſtor* king of *Thrace*, in the Troyan war time: Hee after ſome yeeres, hearing the ouer-throwe of *Priamus*, for to make the treaſure his owne, murthereth the child : the body of the child is taken vp by *Hecuba*, ſhee the ſame day, findeth a ſlight to bee reuenged moſt cruelly of the Tyrant: where nowe would one of our Tragedy writers begin, but with the deliuery of the childe? Then ſhould he ſayle ouer into *Thrace*, & ſo ſpend I know not how many yeeres, and trauaile numbers of places. But where dooth *Euripides*? Euen with the finding of the body, leauing the reſt to be tolde by the ſpirit of *Polidorus*. This need no further to be inlarged, the dulleſt wit may conceiue it. But beſides theſe groſſe abſurdities, how all theyr Playes be neither right Tragedies, nor right Comedies: mingling Kings & Clownes, not becauſe the matter ſo carrieth it: but thruſt in Clownes by head & ſhoulders, to play a part in maieſticall matters, with neither decencie, nor diſcretion. So as neither the admiration & commiſeration, nor the right ſportfulnes, is by their mungrell Tragy-comedie obtained. I know *Apuleius* did ſome-what ſo, but that is a thing recounted with ſpace of time, not repreſented in one moment: & I knowe, the Auncients haue one or two examples of Tragy-comedies, as *Plautus* hath *Amphitrio*: But if we marke them well, we ſhall find, that they neuer, or very daintily, match Horne-pypes and Funeralls.

So falleth it out, that hauing indeed no right Comedy, in that comicall part of our Tragedy, wee haue nothing but ſcurrility, vnwoorthy of any chaſt eares: or ſome extreame ſhew of doltiſhnes, indeed fit to lift vp a loude laughter, and nothing els: where the whole tract of a Comedy, ſhoulde be full of delight, as the Tragedy ſhoulde be ſtill maintained, in a well raiſed admiration. But our Comedians, thinke there is no delight without laughter, which is very wrong, for though laughter may come with delight, yet commeth it not of delight: as though delight ſhould be the cauſe of laughter, but well may one thing breed both together: nay, rather in themſelues, they haue as it were, a kind of contrarietie: for delight we ſcarcely doe, but in things that haue a conueniencie to our ſelues, or to the generall nature: laughter, almoſt euer commeth, of things moſt diſproportioned to our ſelues, and nature. Delight hath a ioy in it, either permanent, or preſent. Laughter, hath onely a ſcornful tickling.

For example, we are rauiſhed with delight to ſee a faire woman, and yet are far from being moued to laughter. VVee laugh at deformed creatures, wherein certainely we cannot delight. VVee delight in good chaunces, we laugh at miſchaunces; we delight to heare the happines of our friends, or Country; at which he were worthy to be laughed at, that would laugh; wee ſhall contrarily laugh ſometimes, to finde a matter quite miſtaken, & goe

downe

downe the hill againſt the byas, in the mouth of ſome ſuch men, as for the reſpect of thē, one ſhalbe hartely ſorry, yet he cannot chuſe but laugh; & ſo is rather pained, then delighted with laughter. Yet deny I not, but that they may goe well together, for as in *Alexanders* picture vvell ſet out, wee delight without laughter, & in twenty mad Anticks we laugh without delight: ſo in *Hercules*, painted with his great beard, and furious countenance, in a womans attire, ſpinning at *Omphales* commaundement, it breedeth both delight and laughter. For the repreſenting of ſo ſtrange a power in loue, procureth delight: and the ſcornefulnes of the action, ſtirreth laughter. But I ſpeake to this purpoſe, that all the end of the comicall part, bee not vpon ſuch ſcornefull matters, as ſtirreth laughter onely: but mixt with it, that delightful teaching which is the end of Poeſie. And the great fault euen in that point of laughter, and forbidden plainely by *Ariſtotle*, is, that they ſtyrre laughter in ſinfull things; which are rather execrable then ridiculous: or in miſerable, which are rather to be pitied then ſcorned. For what is it to make folkes gape at a wretched Begger, or a beggerly Clowne? or againſt lawe of hoſpitallity, to ieſt at ſtraungers, becauſe they ſpeake not Engliſh ſo well as wee doe? what doe we learne, ſith it is certaine

(Nil habet infelix paupertas durius in ſe,)
Quā quod ridiculos homines facit. ———

But rather a buſy louing Courtier: a hartles threat-

ning *Thraſo*. A ſelfe-wiſe-ſeeming ſchoolemaſter. A wry-transformed Traueller. Theſe, if wee ſawe walke in ſtage names, which wee play naturally, therein were delightfull laughter, and teaching delightfulnes: as in the other, the Tragedies of *Buchanan*, doe iuſtly bring forth a diuine admiration. But I haue lauiſhed out too many wordes of this play matter. I doe it becauſe as they are excelling parts of Poeſie, ſo is there none ſo much vſed in England, & none can be more pittifully abuſed. VVhich like an vnmannerly Daughter, ſhewing a bad education, cauſeth her mother Poeſies honeſty, to bee called in queſtion. Other ſorts of Poetry almoſt haue we none, but that Lyricall kind of Songs and Sonnets: which, Lord, if he gaue vs ſo good mindes, how well it might be imployed, and with howe heauenly fruite, both priuate and publique, in ſinging the prayſes of the immortall beauty: the immortall goodnes of that God, who gyueth vs hands to write, and wits to conceiue, of which we might well want words, but neuer matter, of which, we could turne our eies to nothing, but we ſhould euer haue new budding occaſions. But truely many of ſuch writings, as come vnder the banner of vnreſiſtable loue, if I were a Miſtres, would neuer perſwade mee they were in loue: ſo coldely they apply fiery ſpeeches, as men that had rather red Louers writings, and ſo caught vp certaine ſwelling phraſes, which hang together, like a man which once tolde mee, the winde was at

North,

North, VVest, and by South, because he would be sure to name winds enovvet then that in truth they feele those passions, which easily (as I think) may be bewrayed, by that same forciblenes, or *Energia*, (as the Greekes cal it) of the writer. But let this bee a sufficient, though short note, that wee misse the right vse of the materiall point of Poesie.

Now, for the out-side of it, which is words, or (as I may tearme it) *Diction*, it is euē well worse. So is that honny-flowing Matron Eloquence, apparelled, or rather disguised, in a Curtizan-like painted affectation: one time with so farre fette words, that may seeme Monsters: but must seeme straungers to any poore English man. Another tyme, with coursing of a Letter, as if they were bound to followe the method of a Dictionary: an other tyme, with figures and flowers, extreame in winter-starued. But I would this fault were only peculier to Versifiers, and had not as large possession among Prose-printers; and, (which is to be mervailed) among many Scholers; and, (which is to be pittied) among some Preachers. Truly I could wish, if at least I might be so bold, to wish in a thing beyond the reach of my capacity, the diligent imitators of *Tullie*, & *Demosthenes*, (most worthy to be imitated,) did not so much keep, *Nizolian* Paper-bookes of their figures and phrases, as by attentiue translation (as it were) deuour e them whole, and make them wholy theirs. For, vvee

they

they caſt Sugar and Spice, vpon euery diſh that is ſerued to the table; Like thoſe Indians, not content to weare eare-rings at the fit & naturall place of the eares, but they will thruſt Iewels through their noſe, and lippes becauſe they will be ſure to be fine.

Tullie, when he was to driue out *Cateline*, as it were with a Thunder-bolt of eloquence, often vſed that figure of repition, *Venit, venit? imo in Senatum venit &c.* Indeed, inflamed with a well-grounded rage, hee would haue his words (as it were) double out of his mouth: and ſo doe that artificially, which we ſee men doe in choller naturally. And wee, hauing noted the grace of thoſe words, hale them in ſometime to a familier Epiſtle, when it were to too much choller to be chollerick. Now for ſimilitudes, in certaine printed diſcourſes, I thinke all Herbariſts, all ſtories of Beaſts, Foules, and Fiſhes, are rifled vp, that they come in multitudes, to waite vpon any of our conceits; which certainly is as abſurd a ſurfet to the eares, as is poſsible: for the force of a ſimilitude, not being to prooue any thing to a contrary Diſputer, but onely to explane to a willing hearer, when that is done, the reſt is a moſt tedious pratling: rather ouer-ſwaying the memory from the purpoſe wherto they were applyed, then any whit informing the iudgement, already eyther ſatisfied, or by ſimilitudes not to be ſatiſ-fied. For my part, I doe not doubt, when *Antonius* and *Craſſus*, the great fore-

fathers

fathers of *Cicero* in eloquence, the one (as *Cicero* teſtifieth of them,) pretended not to know Arte, the other, not to ſet by it: becauſe with a playne ſenſiblenes, they might win credit of popular eares: which credit, is the neereſt ſtep to perſwaſion: which perſwaſion, is the chiefe marke of Oratory; I doe not doubt (I ſay) but that they vſed theſe tracks very ſparingly, which who doth generally vſe, any man may ſee doth daunce to his owne muſick: and ſo be noted by the audience, more careful to ſpeake curiouſly, then to ſpeake truly.

Vndoubtedly, (at leaſt to my opinion vndoubtedly,) I haue found in diuers ſmally learned Courtiers, a more ſounde ſtile, then in ſome profeſſors of learning: of which I can geſſe no other cauſe, but that the Courtier following that which by practiſe hee findeth fitteſt to nature, therein, (though he know it not,) doth according to Art, though not by Art: where the other, vſing Art to ſhew Art, and not to hide Art, (as in theſe caſes he ſhould doe) flyeth from nature, and indeede abuſeth Art.

But what? me thinks I deſerue to be pounded, for ſtraying from Poetry to Oratorie: but both haue ſuch an affinity in this wordiſh conſideration, that I thinke this digreſsion, will make my meaning receiue the fuller vnderſtanding: which is not to take vpon me to teach Poets hovve they ſhould doe, but onely finding my ſelfe ſick among

the rest, to shewe some one or two spots of the common infection, growne among the most part of VVriters: that acknowledging our selues somwhat awry, we may bend to the right vse both of matter and manner; whereto our language gyueth vs great occasion, beeing indeed capable of any excellent exercising of it. I know, some will say it is a mingled language. And why not so much the better, taking the best of both the other? Another will say it wanteth Grammer. Nay truly, it hath that prause, that it wanteth not Grammer: for Grammer it might haue, but it needes it not; beeing so easie of it selfe, & so voyd of those cumbersome differences of Cases, Genders, Moodes, and Tenses; which I thinke was a peece of the Tower of *Babilons* curse, that a man should be put to schoole to learne his mother-tongue. But for the vttering sweetly, and properly the conceits of the minde, which is the end of speech, that hath it equally with any other tongue in the world: and is particulerly happy, in compositions of two or three words together, neere the Greek, far beyond the Latine: which is one of the greatest beauties can be in a language.

Now, of versifying there are two sorts, the one Auncient, the other Moderne: the Auncient marked the quantitie of each silable, and according to that, framed his verse; the Moderne, obseruing onely number, (with some regarde of the accent,) the chiefe life of it, standeth in that lyke

soun-

ſounding of the words, which wee call Ryme. Whether of theſe be the moſt excellent, would beare many ſpeeches. The Auncient, (no doubt) more fit for Muſick, both words and tune obſeruing quantity, and more fit lively to expreſſe diuers paſsions, by the low and lofty ſounde of the well-weyed ſilable. The latter likewiſe, with hys Ryme, ſtriketh a certaine muſick to the eare: and in fine, ſith it dooth delight, though by another way, it obtaines the ſame purpoſe: there beeing in eyther ſweetnes, and wanting in neither maieſtie. Truely the Engliſh, before any other vulgar language I know, is fit for both ſorts: for, for the Ancient, the Italian is ſo full of Vowels, that it muſt euer be cũbred with *Eliſions*. The Dutch, ſo of the other ſide with Cõſonants, that they cannot yeeld the ſweet ſlyding, fit for a Verſe. The French, in his whole language, hath not one word, that hath his accent in the laſt ſilable, ſauing two, called *Antepenultima*, and little more hath the Spaniſh: and therefore, very graceleſly may they vſe *Dactilet*. The Engliſh is ſubiect to none of theſe defects.

Nowe, for the ryme, though wee doe not obſerue quantity, yet wee obſerue the accent very preciſely: which other languages, eyther cannot doe, or will not doe ſo abſolutely. That *Ceſura*, or breathing place in the middeſt of the verſe, neither Italian nor Spaniſh haue, the French, and we, neuer almoſt fayle of. Laſtly, euen the very ryme it ſelfe, the Italian cannot put in the laſt ſila-

ble, by the French named the Maſculine ryme, but ſtill in the next to the laſt, which the French call the Female; or the next before that, which the Italians terme *Sdrucciola*. The example of the former, is *Buono Suono*, of the *Sdrucciola*, is *Femina Semina*. The French, of the other ſide, hath both the Male, as *Bon*, *Son*, and the Female, as *Plaiſe Taiſe*. But the *Sdrucciola*, hee hath not: where the Engliſh hath all three, as *Due*, *True*, *Father*, *Rather*, *Motion*, *Potion*; with much more which might be ſayd, but that I finde already, the triflingnes of this diſcourſe, is much too much enlarged. So that ſith the euer-praiſe-worthy Poeſie, is full of vertue-breeding delightfulnes, and voyde of no gyfte, that ought to be in the noble name of learning: ſith the blames laid againſt it, are either falſe, or feeble: ſith the cauſe why it is not eſteemed in Englande, is the fault of Poet-apes, not Poets: ſith laſtly, our tongue is moſt fit to honor Poeſie, and to bee honored by Poeſie, I coniure you all, that haue had the euill lucke to reade this incke-waſting toy of mine, euen in the name of the nyne Muſes, no more to ſcorne the ſacred miſteries of Poeſie: no more to laugh at the name of Poets, as though they were next inheritours to Fooles: no more to ieſt at the reuerent title of a Rymer: but to beleeue with *Ariſtotle*, that they were the auncient Treaſurers, of the Grecians Diuinity. To beleeue with *Bembus*, that they were firſt bringers in of all ciuilitie. To beleeue with *Scaliger*, that

that no Philoſophers precepts can ſooner make you an honeſt man, then the reading of *Virgill*. To beleeue with *Clauſerus*, the Tranſlator of *Cornutus*, that it pleaſed the heauenly Deitie, by *Heſiod* and *Homer*, vnder the vayle of fables, to giue vs all knowledge, Logick, Rethorick, Philoſophy, naturall, and morrall: and *Quid non*? To beleeue with me, that there are many miſteries contained in Poetrie, which of purpoſe were written darkely, leaſt by prophane wits, it ſhould bee abuſed. To beleeue with *Landin*, that they are ſo beloued of the Gods, that whatſoeuer they write, proceeds of a diuine fury. Laſtly, to beleeue themſelues, when they tell you they will make you immortall, by their verſes.

Thus doing, your name ſhal floriſh in the Printers ſhoppes; thus doing, you ſhall bee of kinne to many a poeticall Preface; thus doing, you ſhall be moſt fayre, moſt ritch, moſt wiſe, moſt all, you ſhall dwell vpon Superlatiues. Thus dooing, though you be *Libertino patre natus*, you ſhall ſuddenly grow *Herculea proles*:

Si quid mea carmina poſſunt.

Thus doing, your ſoule ſhal be placed with *Dantes Beatrix*, or *Virgils Anchiſes*. But if, (fie of ſuch a but) you be borne ſo neere the dull making *Cataphracti* of *Nilus*, that you cannot heare the Plannet-like Muſick of Poetrie, if you haue ſo earth-creeping a mind, that it cannot lift it ſelfe vp, to looke to the ſky of Poetry: or rather, by a certaine ruſti-

call diſdaine, will become ſuch a Mome, as to be a *Momus* of Poetry: then, though I will not wiſh vnto you, the Aſſes eares of *Midas*, nor to bee driuen by a Poets verſes, (as *Bubonax* was) to hang himſelfe, nor to be rimed to death, as it is ſayd to be doone in Ireland: yet thus much curſe I muſt ſend you, in the behalfe of all Poets, that while you liue, you liue in loue, and neuer get fauour, for lacking skill of a *Sonnet*: and when you die, your memory die from the earth, for want of an *Epitaph*.

FINIS.